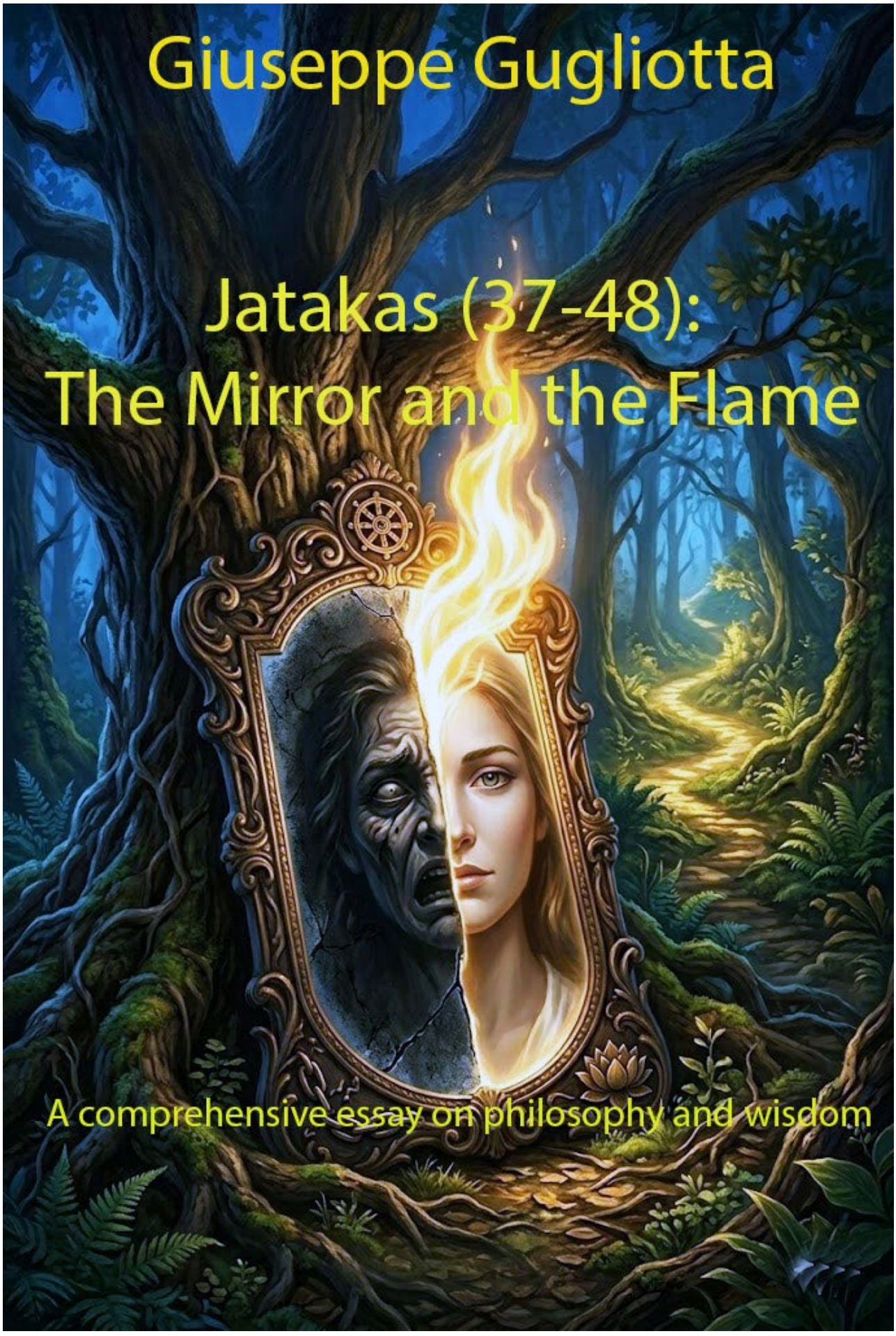
Giuseppe Gugliotta
Jatakas (37-48): The Mirror and the Flame

The Mirror and the Flame – A Journey Through the Jatakas of Right View What happens when the mind is deceived by its own fears, pride, or greed? And how can we learn to see reality as it is, beyond the masks? The Mirror and the Flame is an essay exploring twelve ancient Buddhist tales (Jatakas 37–48), revealing their deep structure: three levels and eight scenes that form a true map of human behavior. From the first level, dominated by the distorting mirror of illusion, we ascend through the revealing flame of action and its consequences, up to the light of right view, where wisdom is no longer a power to possess, but a clarity to exercise. Through unforgettable stories – the servant who grows arrogant above a hidden treasure, the brahmin who destroys himself with his own magic, the treasurer who walks on fire turning it into lotus – the essay shows how these ancient teachings speak directly to our time: to the culture of digital arrogance, to power without ethics, to the need for a wisdom that can unmask deception without hatred. A work for those seeking not just stories, but tools for seeing.

The Law of Causality in the Jatakas of Correct Vision - A comprehensive essay on philosophy and wisdom

Giuseppe Gugliotta

Jatakas (37-48): The Mirror and the Flame



A comprehensive essay on philosophy and wisdom

Image Description:

The image is a fantasy digital illustration that depicts a symbolic scene set in a dark and mysterious forest. In the center of the composition, leaning against the massive roots of a centuries-old tree, there is a large decorated mirror. Inside the mirror, a female face is reflected divided in half, with a bright flame running through it vertically.

Subject Analysis:

The heart of the image is the mirror, which acts as a portal or reflection of the soul. The face inside is the most impactful element:

The Divided Face: The clear division of the face, crossed by a flame, is the central symbol. This split represents a profound duality.

Right Half: Shows a young woman with clear eyes, serene and bright expression. It is the reflection of light, life, reason, or the conscious self.

Left Half: It represents a monstrous, wrinkled face, with an opaque eye and a grotesque expression. It is the reflection of darkness, chaos, fears, or the unconscious, hidden self (the "shadow side").

The Flame: The flame that rises from the mirror and passes through the face has a strong symbolic meaning. It can represent transformation, enlightenment, life energy, or the process of purification and integration of the two halves. It is the element that unites and at the same time separates the two opposite aspects.

Composition Analysis:

The composition is balanced and guides the eye towards the center, where the mirror is located.

Frame and Symbols: The mirror has an elaborate frame made of antiqued metal.

On the top, you can see a circular symbol similar to a Dharma wheel or a Gothic rose window, often associated with balance, the cycle of life, or wisdom.

On either side of the flame, there are small glyphs or seals that suggest a link to magic or alchemy.

At the bottom, at the foot of the serene face, a lotus or a lily blooms, a symbol of purity and enlightenment.

Setting (Background): The background is a dense and dark forest.

Sacred Tree: The gigantic tree with intertwined, mossy roots, which frames the mirror, evokes the image of an ancient tree of life or a keeper of secrets. Its roots envelop the mirror, linking it to the earth and nature.

Light Path: To the right of the mirror, a light path winds its way through the forest. This path probably represents the path of knowledge, enlightenment or the hero's journey, illuminated by the light emanating from the mirror. It creates a contrast between the darkness of the forest and the light of the destination.

Color and Light Analysis:

Colors and light are masterfully used to create the atmosphere and emphasize the symbols.

Cool Shades: The forest is dominated by cool shades of green, blue, and dark brown, creating a sense of mystery, darkness, and depth.

Warm Light: The flame and path are colored orange, yellow, and gold, warm colors that represent energy, hope, enlightenment, and life. This warm light contrasts sharply with the cold environment, drawing attention and suggesting that the light is something that is inside or needs to be discovered.

Symbolic interpretation:

The image can be interpreted in various ways:

1. Duality of the Human Being: It represents the eternal struggle between good and evil, light and darkness, the conscious self and the unconscious, which coexist within each person.

2. Journey of Transformation: The mirror and the flame indicate a process of self-discovery, in which the person must confront their fears and flaws (the monstrous side) to achieve integration and enlightenment (the serene side). The luminous path indicates that this is a long and difficult journey, but one that leads to light.

3. Truth and Illusion: The mirror shows a distorted or hidden reality. It invites us to look beyond appearances and confront our true nature, even when it is painful or monstrous.

4. Alchemy and Magic: The symbols on the frame and the alchemical flame suggest a process of transmutation, where darkness (the monster) can be transformed into light (the woman) through a process of purification and fusion.

In conclusion, the image is a powerful and meaningful work, which uses visual symbols to explore complex philosophical and psychological themes. It is an image that invites reflection and meditation on human nature and the path to self-knowledge.

Jātaka (37-48)

Jātaka (37-48) - The Mirror and the Flame: The Law of Causality in the Jātakas of Correct Vision

From instinctive deception to sacrificial wisdom: a journey through twelve stories about the nature of action and its consequence.

The 12 Jātakas (37-48) make up a fascinating sample of moral stories. Analyzing them, a powerful unifying theme clearly emerges: the law of causality (karma) applied to intelligence and stupidity, or how wisdom (or lack thereof) determines the chain of consequences that leads to salvation or ruin.

The "coaxial" towards which everyone converges is the concept of "Correct Vision" (Sammā-diṭṭhi). Each story is a variation on the theme of how a misperception of reality (greed, ignorance, presumption) generates suffering, while the ability to see the true nature of things (interdependence, danger, duty) leads to salvation or prosperity.

The Outline for the essay is structured on three levels of increasing ethical complexity, with a title and a subtitle.

Essay Outline: Three Levels of Understanding

Level 1: The Poison of the Ego - Greed and Deception as Blindness

Here the action is driven by instinctive desire (food, survival, gain). The "vision" is distorted by lust, and the consequence is immediate and physical: death or destruction.

Scene 1 (The Predatory Deception): The Baka-Jātaka (38) and the Kapota-Jātaka (42).

Value at stake: Survival based on cunning.

Analysis: Both the crane (Baka) and the raven (Kapota) plan a deception for food. The crane uses lies, the crow betrayed friendship. Both fail because their deception clashes with a form of superior intelligence (the crab) or with an environment they cannot read (the kitchen). They are "specialists" of a single move, lacking the flexibility that wisdom gives.

38. Baka-Jātaka

Post video blogger

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/38-baka-jataka-antica-saggezza-lezione.html

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/38-baka-jataka-ancient-wisdom-modern.html

Image Description

Composition and Framing

The image is presented as a tight and dramatic close-up set at the edge of a pond. The composition is dominated by the struggle between two creatures, occupying almost entirely the visual space in vertical format. In the background, marsh reeds stand out blurred, naturally framing the scene and creating depth.

Key visuals

The Crane (Grey Heron)

In the center dominates a crane with gray-blue plumage, similar to a gray heron. Its long serpentine neck is violently distorted into an unnatural curve, pulled downwards. The wings are half-open and disjointed, in the act of flapping convulsively, raising splashes of water. The long, pointed beak is wide open in a silent cry of pain and surprise. The crane's eye is huge, wide open, with the pupil contracted in an expression of pure terror and shock. The white of the eye is veined with red, suggesting strain and pain.

The Crab

Emerging from the dark, murky water of the pond, a large freshwater crab with a brownish, shiny shell holds the crane firmly. One of its claws, massive and serrated, has sunk deep into the throat of the bird, right at the base of the neck. The grip is fierce, inexorable. The crab's limb is tense due to the force applied. The

crab's eye, placed on a peduncle, is calm, fixed, almost meditative – a shocking contrast to the crane's terrified eye.

The Environment

The water is dark, almost black, but you can see ripples and silvery splashes that indicate the violence of the struggle. A few gray feathers float on the surface. In the background, the reeds are sharp enough to define the place, but soft enough not to distract from the central drama.

Light and Color

The light is dramatic and directional, almost like a lighthouse that pierces the darkness of the forest. Light up the scene from above, creating shiny reflections on the crab's armor and the crane's wet feathers. The shadows are deep and threatening. The color palette is dominated by grays, browns, marsh greens and blacks, with a single warmer color accent in the orange-brown of the crab's claw and the amber reflections of the crane's eye.

Image Analysis

Point of View and Composition

The choice of the tight foreground eliminates any distraction and forces the observer to confront the brutality of the moment. The vertical format enhances the length of the crane's neck, making its vulnerability even more apparent. The composition is based on diagonal tension: the crane's neck creates a descending curved line that meets the ascending line of the crab's claw, creating a broken X that symbolizes the clash.

The Contrast of the Eyes

This is the emotional and symbolic fulcrum of the image. The eye of the crane, wide open and terrified, is the window on his predatory soul that suddenly becomes prey. It is the mirror of his failure: his cunning was not wisdom. The crab's eye, calm and fixed, is not cruel, but simply aware. It represents the intelligence that sees beyond deception, the force that is not aggressive but reactive and just.

The Movement

The image freezes an instant of violent transition. The flapping wings, the splashing water, the beak wide open: everything speaks of an event in progress, of a reversal that has just taken place. The crane is not dying in peace; He is realizing, in a flash of pain, that his lie has been exposed in the most physical and definitive way.

The hyper-realistic details

The "meticulous detail" is fundamental. Every ruffled feather, every reflection on the crab's shell, every drop of water suspended in mid-air contributes to making the scene viscerally real. This extreme realism makes the moral lesson more powerful: it is not an abstract fable, but a law of nature applied with surgical precision.

Philosophical Commentary and Interpretation

"The Primordial Law of Consequence"

There is no god who punishes, there is no external judge. There is only nature that reasserts itself. The crane used the lie ("I will take you to a big lake") to deceive the fish. He acted as if he was above the rules of the pond. But the pond also contains the crab, which has not been deceived because its intelligence is of a different kind: it is not calculating cunning, but direct perception of danger and reality.

The "vision distorted by lust" (Level 1)

The crane in the image perfectly embodies the blindness of Level 1. His eyes, now wide with terror, were closed with craving when he spoke to the fish. He only saw the food, not the context. His fatal mistake was to consider all the inhabitants of the pond as prey or fools. He did not recognize the crab's superior intelligence because his paradigm was limited to the predator-prey relationship.

The Crab as "Intelligence that reads the environment"

The crab does not attack first. Wait. He observes. It reads the crane's deception and acts only at the right time. His calm is the calm of those who have a correct vision: they see the crane for what it really is, not for what it pretends to be. In this sense, the crab becomes a small emblem of the wisdom that the sage "The Mirror and the Flame" tries to define.

The Parallelism with the Kapota-Jātaka

Although not visible in the image, this scene mentally recalls the raven of the Kapota-Jātaka (42). Both, crane and crow, are "specialists in a single move". The crane only knew how to lie; The crow only knew how to feign friendship. Both encounter an environment that they cannot decipher: the crab for the crane, the kitchen for the crow. The image thus becomes the visual emblem of all those who, trusting in their own limited cunning, ignore the complexity of reality and are crushed by it.

Visual Conclusion

This illustration is not only the representation of a moment of violence, but a pictorial meditation on immanent justice. The crab does not triumph with joy; simply is. The crane is not punished with cruelty; he simply suffers the consequences of his act. The dark water of the pond becomes a metaphor for the flow of karma, which sooner or later brings the truth to the surface. It is an image that remains etched in your mind: a silent and powerful warning that cunning without wisdom is only a weapon pointed at oneself.

https://youtu.be/yCF5N-SwGsc

THE CRANE AND THE CRAB

Chapter 1

The Sailor of Jetavana

At the time when the Master was staying in the woods of Jetavana, there lived among the monks a Brother of extraordinary skill in sewing garments. He cut, sewed, hemmed and made with such skill that everyone called him "The Tailor".

His cunning, however, far outweighed his skill.

She collected old rags and transformed them into soft robes that looked splendid. After dyeing them, he polished them with shell shells until they shone like silk. Then he put them away, waiting.

The inexperienced monks came to him with fine fabrics, pleading: "We do not know how to make garments; we beg you, make one for us".

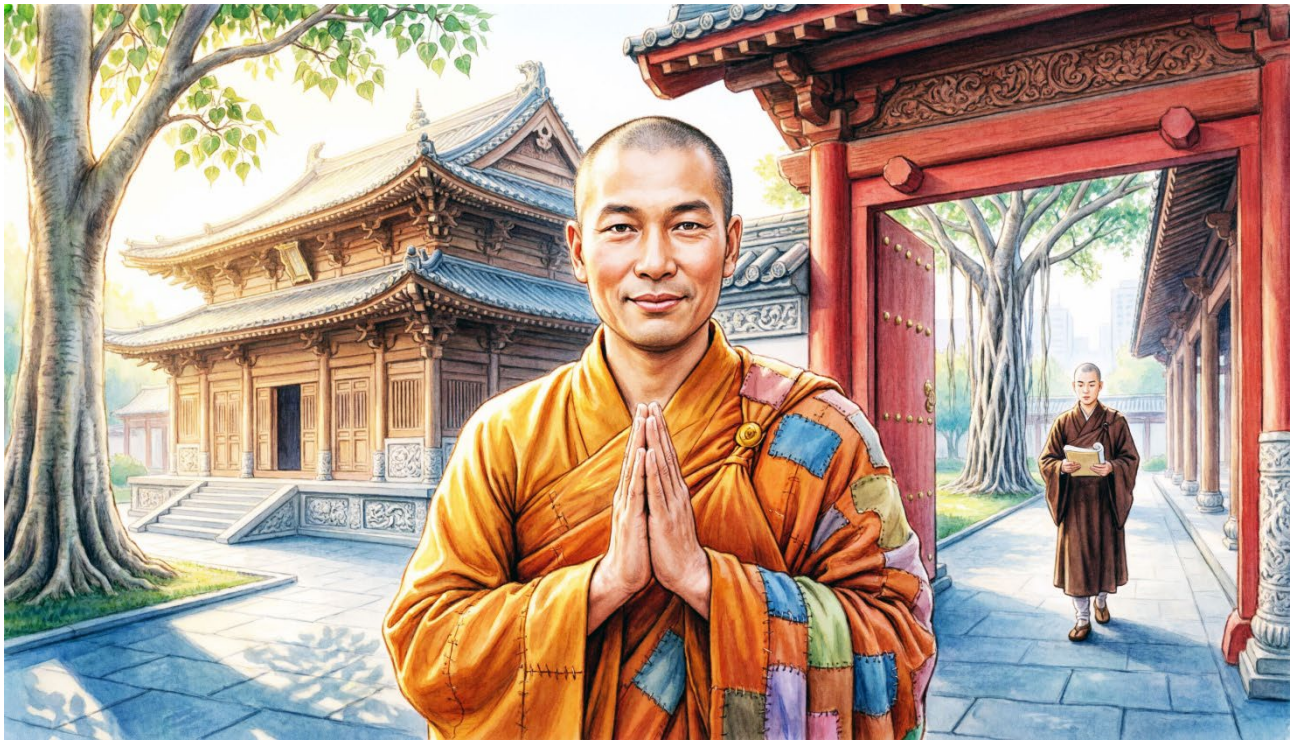
"The work is long," replied the Tailor with feigned reluctance. "But I have here a robe that has just been finished. You can take it, if you leave your new fabrics in exchange."

And so he showed his creation, so bright and perfect in appearance that the monks, unaware of the deception, gave up their precious fabrics and left happy with the exchanged robe.

But when the robe got dirty and was washed in hot water, the truth emerged like a skeleton from the shadows: patches everywhere, threadbare fabric, deception revealed. The monks mourned their naivety, and the fame of the trickster Tailor spread like wind through the branches of Jetavana.

Chapter 2

The Village Challenger



Now, in a remote village, there lived another tailor, equally cunning, who deceived all his comrades with the same arts.

His friends among the monks whispered to him one day: "Master, they say that in Jetavana there is a Tailor who deceives everyone, just as you do."

A spark of defiance lit up in the eyes of the Country Tailor. "What if I went to cheat that presumptuous citizen?" he thought.

With old and worn rags he made a wonderful robe, dyed with an orange so perfect that it seemed painted by the setting sun. He put it on and left for Jetavana.

As soon as the city tailor saw her, his eyes lit up with greed.

"Master," he said, approaching, "are you the ones who made that robe?"

"Just me," replied the other with feigned humility.

"Give it to me, I beg you; in return you will have another garment."

"Master, we country monks have a hard time getting hold of the things we need. If I give you this, what am I left with?"

"I have brand new fabrics in my accommodation. Take them and make a garment for yourself."

The Country Tailor sighed, like one who makes a sacrifice. "Venerable, here is the fruit of my labor. But if you insist... What can I do? Take it."

And so, mistaking the rag robe for precious fabrics, the village tailor deceived the city tailor and returned to his village smiling.

It was not long before the Tailor of Jetavana, washing his robe in hot water, saw patches and rags emerge like orange-tinted ghosts. Shame pierced him like a sword. And soon the whole brotherhood laughed at his fate: the cheat had been cheated.

Chapter 3

Stagnation and the Predator

One day the monks were sitting in the Hall of Truth, discussing this curious reversal, when the Master came in and asked the topic of their conversation. Hearing the story, he smiled with that wisdom that spans the centuries.

"Brothers," he said, "this is not the only time the Tailor of Jetavana has been deceived. In ancient times the same thing happened, and as he has now been deceived by his country confrere, so it happened in the past."

And so, the Master told a story of ancient times.

Chapter 4

In the presence of the Pond

In a distant era, the Bodhisatta was the Spirit of a tree that stood near a small pond filled with lotus flowers.

Every summer, the waters of that pond dropped dangerously, leaving the fish in shallower and warmer waters. In that pond lived a multitude of fish, unaware of the danger that the air brought with it.

A crane, thin and hungry, observed the scene from above. His yellow eyes calculated, his cunning brain plotted. "I must find a way," she whispered to herself, "to deceive and devour them all."

He went down to the shore and crouched down in an attitude of deep meditation, his head bowed, his eyes half-closed, the very image of thoughtful wisdom.

The fish, seeing it, approached curiously. "Madam," they asked, "what are you thinking about with such concentration?"

"I think of you, poor fish," replied the crane in a honeyed voice.

"To us? And what on earth, your lordship?"

The water is so low, the food scarce, the heat unbearable. Sitting here, I wondered with anguish: what will become of you poor people?"

'And what can we do, sir?' begged the fishes, terror in their little hearts.

'If you follow my advice,' said the crane, 'I myself will take you one by one in my beak, and carry you to a magnificent pond, large and deep, covered with lotuses of five colours, where the water is cool, and the food plentiful.'

The fish looked at each other, suspicious. "Madam," said the eldest, "since the beginning of the world, no crane has ever taken care of fish. You want to devour us, one by one."

The crane feigned offense. "Me? Devour you while you trust me? If you do not take my word for it, send one of you with me to see the pond with your own eyes.'

The fish met in council. At last they chose a large fish, blind in one eye, which they thought was smart enough to get by both in the water and on land. 'Here,' said they, 'he will accompany you.'

Chapter 5

The Deception Revealed

The crane caught the fish gently and flew towards the magnificent pond. He showed it all, the deep waters, the lotuses in bloom, the cool shade. Then he brought him back and left him among his companions.

The fish told wonders. "It's true! It really exists! A paradise pond!"

The enthusiasm spread among the fish like fire in the forest. 'Quick, Mrs. Crane, take us there!'

The crane took the big blind fish back first. He flew to the pond, yes, but he did not land on it. On one bank stood a monitor mast, and at its fork the crane stopped. With a sharp blow, he slammed the fish against the wood, killed it, devoured it, and dropped the bones at the foot of the tree.

Then he went back to the pond. "I dropped it. Who is next?"

One after the other, all the fish followed the same fate. The crane devoured them all, and the bones piled up under the tree like a macabre monument to his cunning.

When the last fish disappeared, the crane looked at the now deserted pond. But lo and behold, on the muddy bottom, a crab was moving slowly.

The crane, still hungry, approached. 'Master Crab, I have brought all the fish into a beautiful pond, covered with lotuses. Come, I'll take you too."

'And how would you carry me?' asked the crab, suspiciously.

"In my beak, of course."

"Ah, but you could drop me," said the crab. "I'm not coming."

"Don't worry, I'll hold you firmly for the whole trip."

The crab thought to himself, 'This scoundrel has certainly not brought the fish to the pond. If it really takes me there, great. If not... I will crush his head and kill him.'

And he said aloud, "Friend crane, you would not be able to hold me firmly. We crabs have a very powerful grip. But if I could seize your neck with my claws, then I could go with you.'

The crane, which did not suspect the crab's cunning, agreed.

The crab wrapped its claws around the crane's neck like blacksmith's pincers. "Now you can go."

Chapter 6

Crab Justice

The crane flew, showing the crab the pond from a distance, then turned towards the Varana tree.

"Aunt," said the crab, "the pond is on that side. Why are you going to the other side?"

"Aunt, really?" laughed the crane maliciously. "And you would be my nephew? Do you think you are my master, and I am your slave who carries you around? He looks down at the foot of the tree. Do you see those bones? So I have eaten all your fish friends, and so I will eat you also.'

The crab tightened his grip. "Because of their stupidity those fish died. But I will not give you this satisfaction. No, I will kill you. Silly that you are nothing else, you didn't realize that I was deceiving you. If we die, we will die together. But first I'll cut off your head."

And so saying, he clasped his claws round the crane's throat with such force that the bird's beak burst open, and tears of pain and terror streamed down his face.

"Lord, have mercy! I won't eat you! Save my life!"

"Then go down to the pond and put me in the water," ordered the crab.

The crane, trembling, obeyed. He went down to the muddy bank and laid the crab on the edge of the water.

But the crab, before entering, with a clean blow of the claws, cut off the head of the crane as one cuts a lotus stem with a knife.

The tree under which it all happened had its Spirit. The Spirit of the tree, who was the Bodhisatta, observed the scene and, rejoicing in the justice done, made the forest resound with a sweet and powerful song:

"Deception is of no use to those who deceive,

Look at the crane: deception has killed it,

And the crab, small and wise, triumphed!"

Chapter 7

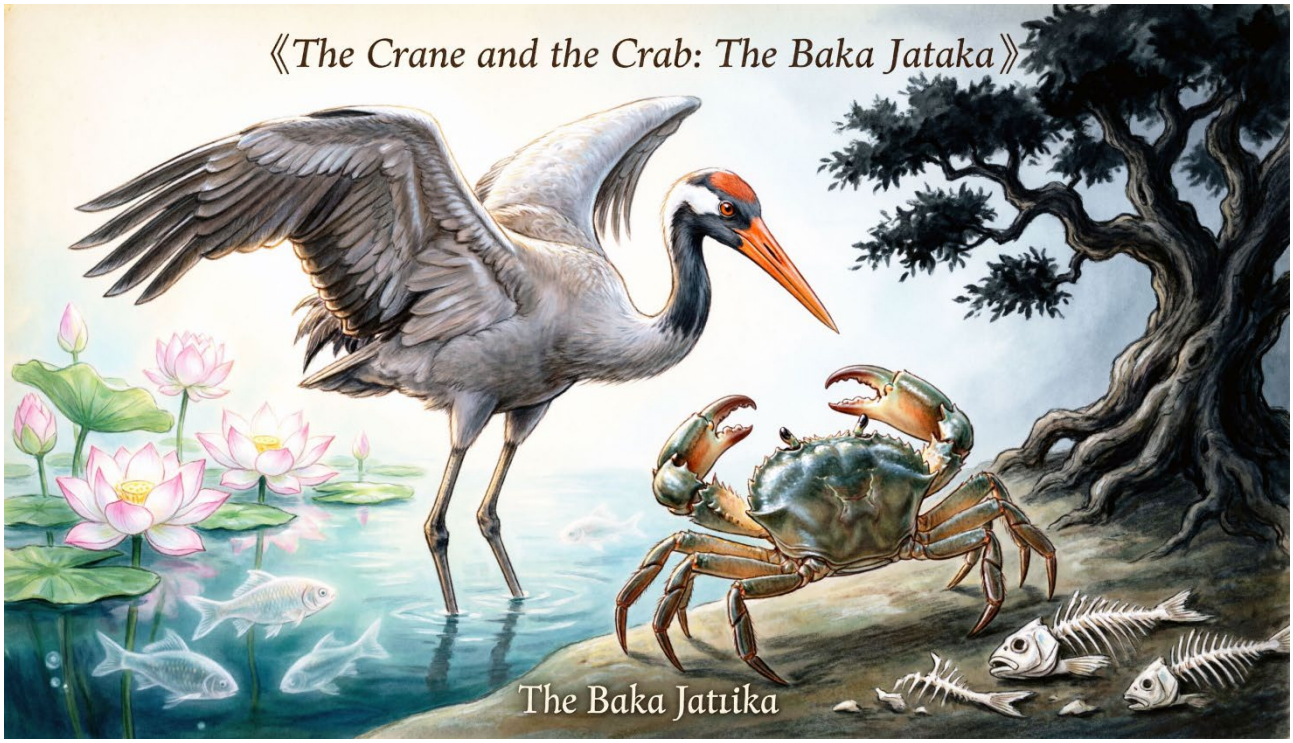
The Key to History

When the story was over, the Master smiled at the assembled monks.

"Brethren, this is not the first time that this man has been deceived. In those distant days, the Tailor of Jetavana was the crane, the Country Tailor was the crab, and I myself was the Spirit of the tree who saw everything and sang the glory of justice."

And the monks understood that deception, however cunning, always finds its judge. And that true wisdom does not lie in deceiving others, but in seeing reality with clear eyes, like the crab that saw beyond the lies of the crane.

Cover for the short story Baka Jātaka and conclusion



Symbolic image of the eternal clash between deception and wisdom.

The Crab and the Crane in the Age of Digital Deception

There is a profound reason why these stories, born millennia ago on the banks of the Ganges, continue to speak to us today with a clear and powerful voice. The Baka-Jātaka is not just the story of a deceiving crane and an executioner crab: it is a mirror that reflects immutable human dynamics, which contemporary culture has simply covered with new clothes.

The Architecture of Deception: From the Tin to the Web

The crane in our story is a perfect social predator. His strategy is both elementary and sophisticated: he constructs a false but desirable narrative ("a magnificent pond with five-colored lotuses"), gains the trust of the victims with a partial demonstration of honesty (he takes the blind fish to see the place), and then exploits that trust to consummate his deception, one victim after another.

In the twenty-first century, this dynamic is repeated every day on a planetary scale.

Think of online scams: the fake Nigerian prince, the non-existent inheritance, the miraculous investment. The structure is identical. The scammer (the crane) builds a desirable parallel reality, gains the victim's trust with small initial evidence (perhaps a small real profit), and then consummates his deception, often until the victim's complete financial failure.

Think of fake news and disinformation: someone builds a false but emotionally satisfying narrative ("they" want to hurt you, "we" have the hidden truth). Fish believe, because lies are better than complex reality. And those who spread the lie, like the crane, feed on the attention, the power, the money they get.

The crane, today, does not have gray feathers: it has an algorithm, a social profile, a YouTube channel.

The Weight of Bones: The Silent Accumulation of Victims

In our story, fish bones pile up silently at the foot of the Varana tree. No one sees them, until the crab discovers them.

In contemporary culture, we have a term for this phenomenon: "collateral damage." The victims of scams, disinformation, mass manipulations, often remain invisible, reduced to statistics, to numbers in a report, to lost "users". Their individual pain is lost in the abstraction of data.

But the Jataka reminds us that every victim counts. Every fish devoured is a broken life. And justice, when it comes, comes because someone (the crab) has the courage to look beyond the surface and see the truth that the crane wanted to hide.

The Crab: The Fact-Checker Archetype

The real hero of the story is the crab. He is not the strongest, he is not the fastest. His weapon is only one: intelligent distrust, the ability not to trust appearances, to test reality before surrendering to it.

When the crane offers him transport, the crab does not refuse a priori, but negotiates the conditions: "If I can hold your neck with my claws, then I will come". This is the move of the fact-checker, the investigative journalist, the scientist who does not accept results without verifying the method. It is the ability to say: "Before I trust, I want to see with my own eyes, I want to keep a control, I want a guarantee".

In our time of information overload, the crab is critical literacy personified. It is the ability to stop and ask, "Who is it that is talking to me? What is your real intention? What evidence does he have? What if this story is too good to be true?"

The crane counts on haste, emotion, desire. The crab wins with calm, reason, and a firm grip on reality.

The End of the Crane: Viral Justice

The crane dies at the hands of its own victim. The crab, with a clean blow, severs the deceiver's head "as one cuts a lotus stem with a knife".

In contemporary culture, we often witness similar phenomena: the powerful fall at the hands of those who seemed weaker. I think of the MeToo movement, where prey (often women) came together to unmask predators who had acted unpunished for decades. I am thinking of journalistic investigations that dismantle financial empires built on lies. I am thinking of the social mobilization that leads to the fall of oppressive regimes.

Justice, sometimes, comes when you least expect it, and from where you least expect it. A crab, in a forgotten pond, can do what all the fish together could not: stop the crane.

The Applauding Forest: The Role of the Conscious Community

At the end of the story, the Spirit of the tree makes the forest resound with a song of joy for justice accomplished. He does not remain silent. He doesn't say "it's none of my business". Celebrate the truth.

This is perhaps the most powerful element for our contemporaneity. In an era in which cynicism reigns supreme, in which we are often disinterested in the injustices of others, the Jātaka reminds us that the community has a role: to bear witness, to applaud justice, to pass on memory.

When we see a scam exposed, a powerful fall, a deception revealed, we should not remain indifferent. We should, like the Spirit of the tree, make our approval ring. Because every time the truth wins, the entire social ecosystem benefits.

The Relevance of Morality

The Master concluded the story with a simple and profound stanza:

"Deception is of no use to those who deceive."

Today, this truth takes on new forms but ancient substance.

The company that conquers by hiding data is sooner or later discovered. The politician who lies, sooner or later is proven wrong. The influencer who builds a false life, sooner or later collapses under the weight of contradictions. The financial system based on speculation and deception sooner or later implodes.

It is not magic, it is not divine punishment. It is the law of social causality: lies require ever greater lies to sustain them, until the burden becomes unbearable. And something (a crab, a journalist, an ordinary citizen) breaks the crane's neck.

A Lesson for Our Time

Perhaps the most valuable lesson that the Baka-Jātaka offers to contemporary culture is this: salvation lies not in strength, but in lucidity.

There were many fish, but they were all devoured because they were unable to see the deception. There was only one crab, but it survived and triumphed because it kept its gaze clear.

In a world that bombards us with messages, offers, promises, narratives, the Jātaka invites us to be like the crab. Not to let ourselves be dazzled by appearances. To maintain a healthy distrust of those who promise easy paradises. To look at the bones at the foot of the tree before entrusting ourselves to those who say they want to save us.

And when we see someone finally exposing a deception, let our approval ring out, like the Spirit of the tree.

Because the forest that applauds is a forest that learns. And a forest that learns is a forest that will no longer be deceived.

This is how the story of the Baka-Jātaka ends, a bridge between the ancient wisdom of India and the challenges of our time. May the crab live in each of us.

42. Kapota-Jātaka

Image Description

Composition and Framing

The image is presented as a rustic and intimate interior scene, framed in a vertical format that enhances the verticality of the space: from the stone floor to the ceiling with exposed beams. The composition is deliberately divided into two overlapping worlds: the high and the low, the light and the shadow, the life and the death. The eye of the observer is naturally guided from top to bottom, following the path of moral narration.

Key visuals

The Rustic Kitchen

The setting is a country kitchen with timeless charm. The walls are made of rough and irregular stone, marked by time and smoke. In the center dominates a large stone fireplace (the hearth), with a dark and sooty interior, witness to countless cooking. The floor is paved with stones worn out by use. The atmosphere is warm and enveloping, typical of a domestic refuge, despite the gloomy scene that takes place below.

Above: the pigeon

On a thick dark wooden beam near the ceiling, a pigeon with soft gray plumage is posed in a pose of serene tranquility. Its feathers are smooth and well-groomed, its chest slightly swollen in a quiet cooing. His small, shiny eyes look down with an expression that could be one of placid indifference or silent awareness. A thin golden light envelops him, almost like a secular halo. He is at home, safe, in his "familiar home".

Below: The Raven

On the stone floor, near a half-open sack of wheat from which some grains emerge, lies the lifeless body of a black crow. His position is unnatural and twisted: his wings are open and disjointed, his legs shrunken, his neck bent back at an angle that only death allows. His black plumage is dirty and dull, covered in a dark patina of soot mixed with white patches of flour – the tangible signs of his attempted theft and the chaos he has ventured into. Next to him, an overturned wooden ladle and a few scattered grains of wheat tell the story of his failed raid.

The Light

From a small window, probably with dirty glass or a simple railing, a beam of warm, golden sunlight penetrates the room. This beam is cut cleanly: it precisely illuminates the beam where the pigeon rests, creating a luminous halo around the bird. The light does not reach the crow, which remains shrouded in the shadow of the floor, despite being physically closer to the window. The separation between light and shadow is clear, almost theatrical.

Color Palette

The colors are warm and earthy: ochre, brown, gray of the stone, dark brown of the wood. The jet black of the dead crow is the point of maximum contrast, while the gray of the pigeon in the light takes on silver and warm reflections. The white of the flour on the crow is an almost ghostly detail.

Image Analysis

Vertical Composition as a Moral Hierarchy

The use of the vertical format is not accidental: it creates an unambiguous visual and moral hierarchy. The high is the kingdom of security, peace, home. The bottom is the realm of fall, of punishment, of death. The pigeon above, the crow below. This spatial arrangement visually translates the concept of "consequence": the evil action literally falls downwards.

The Play of Lights as Implicit Judgment

The light that illuminates the pigeon but leaves the crow in the shadows is the real visual twist. It is not a neutral natural light: it is a selective, almost theatrical light, which acts as a silent judge. The pigeon is "enlightened" because its choice to remain in its environment, not to betray, puts it in harmony with the order of things. The crow is "in the shadows" because his greed has taken him out of his natural environment (the open sky, the trees) into a place he did not understand, and the darkness of the kitchen (the extinguished fireplace, the soot) has swallowed him up.

The Contrast of Bodies: Life and Death

The physical contrast is violent. The pigeon is intact, soft, alive. Her collected body speaks of inner peace. The crow is broken, dirty, dead. His twisted pose cries out the violence of agony, perhaps killed by the cook or simply trapped and dead in the chaos he himself had created. The overturned ladle and the scattered wheat are the proofs of his failure: he died trying to take what was not his.

The narrative details

Each object in the image tells a story. The sack of wheat: the object of desire. The scattered grains: the beginning of the theft. The fallen ladle: the stampede or the fight. The soot on the crow: the foreign environment that marked and killed him. The window: the outside world, the freedom that the crow has lost and that the pigeon still possesses.

Philosophical Commentary and Interpretation

"Betrayed friendship" and its price

The Kapota-Jātaka is the story of betrayed friendship: the crow pretends to be the friend of the pigeon to be introduced to the kitchen, with the intention of taking advantage of the provisions. The image captures the epilogue of that betrayal, not the moment of deception. The crow died because it violated two fundamental laws: hospitality (betrayed friendship) and natural order (a wild animal in a human kitchen).

"One-Move Specialists"

The crow, like the crane of the Baka-Jātaka, is a "one-move specialist". His only strategy is deception and theft. But when he enters a complex environment like a kitchen – with its rhythms, its dangers (fire, humans, utensils) – his unique move is not enough. He does not know how to read the context. He does not understand that the kitchen is not like a tree or a field: it has its own rules, invisible to a stranger. His death is the deterministic outcome of his ignorance.

The security of the "familiar home"

The pigeon is "safe in its familiar home". This is not an undeserved privilege: it is the result of a relationship of trust built over time. The pigeon lives in the kitchen because humans tolerate it, perhaps feed it. He knows the rhythms of the house, he knows when it is safe and when it is not. His peace is not naivety, but practical wisdom: he knows what his place is and remains there. The crow, on the other hand, has no patience: he wants everything immediately, without building an authentic relationship.

The parallelism with the Baka-Jātaka

While the image of the Baka-Jātaka was dominated by the violence in progress (the claw that squeezes the throat), this image of the Kapota-Jātaka is dominated by the static nature of the consequence. The crane is punished while doing evil; the raven lies already dead, the punishment has already taken place. They are two different moments of the same law: the moment of impact (Baka) and the moment of silence after the fall (Kapota). Together, the two images would tell the entire arc of karmic justice: the clash and the quiet of the tomb.

Light as "Correct Vision"

If we apply the general theme of the essay, the light that illuminates the pigeon represents the Correct Vision (Sammā-diṭṭhi). The pigeon "sees" reality correctly: it knows that the kitchen is a refuge, not a pantry to be plundered; He knows that friendship with humans must be respected, not betrayed. The crow, on the other hand, had a vision distorted by craving: it saw only food, not dangers. His darkness is the darkness of his own ignorance.

Conclusion: The quiet power of the fairy tale

This image, with its "storybook charm," is deceptively peaceful. There is no blood, there is no struggle going on. Yet, moral power is perhaps stronger for this very reason. The dead crow is there, silent, like a permanent reminder: every action has a consequence. The peace of the pigeon is not fragile, but earned. The image does not shout its moral: it whispers it, through the light, the shadow, and the twisted body of a bird that has chosen deception and has lost everything.

Post video blogger

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/42kapota-jataka-il-piccione-e-il-corvo.html

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/42kapota-jataka-pigeon-and-crow.html

https://youtu.be/Lzszc-Dh4Ic

THE PIGEON AND THE CROW

Jātaka No. 42

Chapter 1

The Greedy Monk

Near Jetavana, among the monks who followed the Master, there was one known for his greed. The confreres, worried, went to the Benedict and said to him:

"Sir, this monk is greedy. He is never satisfied with the food he receives, he always seeks more, and his greed disturbs the peace of the community."

The Master called the monk and asked him directly: "Brother, is what they say true? Are you greedy?"

The monk, unable to lie to the Awakened One, lowered his head and replied, "Yes, Lord, it is true."

Then the Master smiled with that compassion that embraced all beings and said, "Not only in this life, brother, have you been greedy. Even in ancient times, through your greed you lost your life and forced the wise to abandon their home. Listen, and I'll tell you a story from the past."

And so, Master narrated the events of a distant age.

Chapter 2

The Treasurer's Pigeon

In those ancient times, when Brahmadatta reigned in Benares, the Bodhisatta was reborn as a pigeon.

Now, the inhabitants of Benares had the pious custom of hanging straw baskets in various places, to offer shelter and comfort to the birds. The cook of the Great Royal Treasurer had also hung one in his kitchen, in a sheltered corner, away from the smoke and heat of the hearth.

In that basket the Bodhisatta had taken up his abode. Every day, at dawn, he went out in search of food in the fields and gardens, feeding on grass seeds and small grains. In the evening he returned to his refuge, safe and welcoming. And so he spent his days, in peace and contentment.

The Treasurer's kitchen was a place of wonderful scents: salted fish and fresh fish, fine meats, spices and sauces boiled in the pots, filling the air with aromas that would have tempted any creature.

Chapter 3

The Greedy Raven

One day, a crow flying nearby passed over the kitchen and smelled the scents. His nostrils dilated, his tongue dried up instantly, and a burning desire to taste these delicacies completely invaded him.

"Somehow," he thought, "I must get into that kitchen."

He perched in a nearby tree and watched for a long time. In the evening he saw the pigeon return to its nest and enter the kitchen without any problems. A spark of cunning shone in his eyes.

"Through that pigeon," he realized, "I can do it."

The next day at dawn, when the Bodhisatta went out on his daily quest, the raven followed him like a shadow. Wherever the pigeon went, there was the crow, step by step, flight by flight.

The pigeon, noticing this insistence, stopped and asked politely, "Friend, why are you following me like this?"

The raven assumed a devout expression. "My lord, your noble and peaceful demeanor has won my admiration. I want to follow you and learn from you."

The pigeon shook its head. "Man, our natures are different. The food I am looking for is not yours. You will suffer if you cling to me."

"My lord," insisted the raven fervently, "while you seek your food, I will seek mine beside you. Don't worry."

The Bodhisatta, who saw sincerity in the instant but could not read the future, agreed. "Be it as you wish. But be diligent and sincere in your intent."

So they began to look for food together. The pigeon scratched through the grass, pecking at seeds and grains. The crow wandered among the cow dung, turning them over with its beak to extract insects and worms, until it was satiated. Then he returned to the pigeon and, with a knowing air, commented:

"My lord, you spend too much time on food. We should eat faster, with more... determination."

The pigeon smiled to himself and did not answer.

In the evening, when they returned to the Treasurer's kitchen, the raven entered with the pigeon. The cook, seeing the newcomer, exclaimed, "Oh, our bird has brought a friend!" And, with a good heart, he hung a second basket for the crow next to that of the pigeon.

From that day on, the two birds dwelt together in the kitchen.

Chapter 4
The Scent of Fish

Now it happened that the Grand Treasurer bought a large quantity of fine fish. The cook, to preserve it in the best possible way, hung it in various points of the kitchen, where the air could circulate and keep it fresh.

The raven saw those fish hanging, shiny and fragrant, and a devouring greed seized him. All night long he tossed and turned in his basket, moaning and sighing, without sleeping a wink.

The next day, when the Bodhisatta was preparing to go out and called to him, "Come, fellow raven, let us go and look for food," the raven replied in a faint voice:

"Go without me, my lord. I have terrible stomach pain."

The pigeon looked at him with piercing eyes. "Man, in my entire life I have never heard of crows with stomach pains. I know that you ravens go hungry in each of the three night watches, but if you eat a lamp wick, the hunger is instantly appeased. You, on the other hand, want those fish hanging in the kitchen."

He paused, then added gently, "Human food is not for you. Don't give in to this weakness. Come with me, let's look for our natural food together."

"I cannot, my lord," groaned the raven, his eyes fixed on the fish.

The Bodhisatta sighed. "Your own actions will judge you. Don't fall prey to greed, friend. Try to be steadfast." And with this exhortation, he spread his wings and flew away towards the fields, his heart heavy for what he knew would happen.

Chapter 5

The Trap of Gluttony

The cook, unaware of the dramas that were taking place among the birds, set to work. He took different varieties of fish and cooked them in different ways: some fried, some stewed, some spicy. When the cooking was almost complete, he lifted the lids slightly to let the steam out, then placed a bamboo strainer on a pot and went out to the door to wipe the sweat from his forehead.

It was the moment the raven was waiting for.

He stuck his head out of the basket. A quick glance: the cook was out. The time had come.

"It's now or never," he thought. "The question is, do I take a chopped piece or a whole bite?"

He reasoned that it would take too long to eat enough minced fish, and the cook could return. Better a nice big shot to carry in the basket and nibble calmly in safety.

With a leap, he descended and landed on the bamboo strainer above the pot.

Crack! The strainer creaked under its weight.

"What was it?" The cook turned abruptly and ran back in. He saw the crow on the strainer and understood instantly.

"Ah, that damned crow wants to eat my master's lunch! I work for my master, not for that scoundrel! And what does it matter to me, I would like to know?"

He quickly closed the door and grabbed the crow. Without mercy, he tore off all his feathers, one by one, while the raven shrieked in pain and terror.

Then he took some ginger, pounded it with salt and cumin, mixed it all with sour buttermilk, and dipped the featherless crow in that spicy and burning mixture. Finally, he threw it back into his basket, a mass of living, pulsating flesh, in agony.

And there the raven lay, groaning, overwhelmed with suffering.

Chapter 6
Justice and Departure

In the evening, the Bodhisatta returned from his daily search. As soon as he entered the kitchen, he saw the miserable state of the crow. The pens torn out, the skin burned by spices, the eyes dull with pain.

The pigeon shook his head, his heart full of sadness but not of surprise. "Ah, greedy crow," he murmured. "You didn't want to listen to my words. Your own greed has led you to this end."

And at that moment, the Bodhisatta recited these verses:

"The stubborn man who, exhorted, does not listen

To friends who kindly recommend it,

He will surely perish, like the greedy crow,

Who mocked the pigeon's warnings."

Then, looking at the raven's battered body, he sighed. "I can't stay here anymore either."

He spread his wings and flew away into the night, leaving the Treasurer's kitchen forever.

The raven died shortly after, in the same basket that had been his refuge. The cook, finding him dead the next morning, threw the basket with all its contents on the garbage pile, as waste.

Chapter 7

The Key to History

When the story was finished, the Master looked at the greedy monk and said, "Brother, you were as greedy in the past as you are now. And because of your greed, the wise and virtuous of those times had to abandon their homes."

Then, with infinite compassion, the Blessed One expounded the Four Noble Truths. At the end of the talk, that monk, deeply touched, reached the Fruit of the Second Path, freeing himself from most of its chains.

Finally, the Master revealed the connection between existences:

"The greedy monk of today was the raven of those times. And the wise pigeon who gave the good advice and then had to flee, that was me."

Cover for the Kapota-Jātaka story and conclusion

Conclusion

The Raven and the Pigeon in the Age of Digital False Friendship

If the Baka-Jātaka spoke to us of predatory deception and justice that comes from outside (the crab), the Kapota-Jātaka speaks to us of something even more subtle and closer to our daily experience: the betrayal of trust and the invasion of safe spaces by those who pretend to be friends.

The crow does not attack head-on. He does not threaten, he does not use force. He uses the most devious and ancient strategy in the world: he approaches, admires, follows like a shadow, declares devotion. He builds a relationship of trust and then betrays it the moment the object of desire presents itself.

This dynamic, in the twenty-first century, is everywhere.

Friendship as a Tool: The Raven in Social Media

The crow that follows the pigeon "like its shadow" is the exact metaphor for certain behaviors on social media. People who ask for friendship, who comment enthusiastically, who show themselves devout and admired, only to then, one day, reveal their true nature: they are looking for something. A favor, a recommendation, a sharing, a contact, confidential information.

The wise pigeon warns, "Dude, our natures are different. The food I am looking for is not yours. You will suffer if you cling to me." But the crow insists, because he knows that proximity to the pigeon is the key to accessing the kitchen.

How many times have we seen, in the professional or personal world, people who approach us not for who we are, but for what we can offer them? Friendship as a means, not as an end. The relationship as a bridge to a profit.

The Kitchen as an Environment You Don't Know How to Read

The crow dies because he doesn't understand cooking. It is a wild animal in a human space, with its implicit rules, its dangers, its rhythms. The squeaking strainer, the chef who returns, the door that closes: these are all signs that he does not know how to interpret because his craving clouds his perception.

In contemporary culture, this translates into a phenomenon that we could call "situational incompetence": entering contexts that one does not understand, convinced that one's cunning is enough to get by. We see examples of this every day:

- The influencer who thinks he can manage a complex political debate with the same techniques used to sell cosmetics, and comes out destroyed.

- The scammer who thinks he can deceive a closed and close-knit community, and is unmasked in a few hours.

- Those who use aggressive strategies in environments that require delicacy, and burn every bridge.

The crow is a "one-move specialist": he knows how to pretend to be a friend, he knows how to wait, he knows how to seize the moment. But he does not know how to read the environment in which he moves. And this kills him.

The Raven's Punishment: The Public Unmasking

The end of the crow is brutal and humiliating. He is not simply killed: he is plucked, soaked in burning spices, thrown into his own basket as living waste. It is a punishment that has something performative, almost theatrical. The heart does not limit itself to eliminating the problem: it exposes it, marks it, reduces it to an object of contempt.

In the digital age, this is the dynamic of "erasure" or "viral unmasking." Those who are caught betraying trust, lying, deceiving, do not only suffer legal or professional consequences. He suffers public humiliation, a media pillory, a social condemnation that is often disproportionate and sometimes cruel. Its feathers (reputation, image, prestige) are torn one by one in front of everyone.

The difference? In history, the raven's punishment is fair and proportionate. In the real world, the digital pillory is often wild and uncontrolled. But the psychological dynamic is the same: the community reacts violently to those who have betrayed trust, because the betrayal of friendship is one of the most serious social sins.

The Pigeon That Leaves: The Wisdom of Detachment

Perhaps the deepest element of the Kapota-Jātaka is the reaction of the pigeon. He doesn't fight, he doesn't take revenge, he doesn't stay to enjoy the crow's punishment. He sees, understands, and leaves.

"I can't stay here anymore," he says, and flies away.

This is the wisdom of detachment. In a world that pushes us to stay, to fight, to defend our spaces, sometimes the wisest act is simply to leave. The kitchen is no longer a safe place, not because it has changed, but because its nature has been revealed: it is a place where greed can enter and destroy. The pigeon does not wait for another crow to arrive. It does not attempt to reform the system. He is under no illusions that he can control who enters. He simply leaves.

How many of us stay in toxic environments for too long? How many times do we say to ourselves "I can handle it", "I can change it", "it won't be so bad"? The pigeon teaches us that sometimes the real victory is to recognize when a place has ceased to be home, and to have the courage to look for another.

The Forest that is silent? The Role of the Community

Unlike the Baka-Jātaka, there is no applauding Spirit of the tree here. There is no forest that rejoices. There is only the pigeon that observes in silence, and then flies away. The crow dies, and his body with the basket ends up on the garbage pile. End.

This absence of celebration is perhaps even more realistic. In real life, the small daily justices often go unnoticed. The raven who betrays friendship dies in his solitude, and few notice him. The pigeon starts again, and no one applauds him.

But there is a community that listens: us. We who read this story millennia later. We who learn from the wisdom of the pigeon and the greed of the crow. We who can choose, every day, whether to be one or the other.

A Lesson for the Digital Age

The Kapota-Jātaka offers us three fundamental teachings for our time:

1. Be wary of friendships that are too fast. The crow introduces itself, admires, follows, and in a few hours it is already in the pigeon's basket. Real relationships take time. Those who demand immediate intimacy often hide ulterior motives.

2. Know your limits and environments. The raven dies because he enters an environment he does not understand. Before venturing into new contexts, study them, observe them, learn the rules. Cunning is not a substitute for knowledge.

3. Knowing how to start is wisdom. The pigeon does not win in the usual sense of the term. He does not defeat the raven, he does not obtain justice, he does not recover anything. But it preserves itself. And in a world that consumes energy and souls, preserving oneself is the greatest victory.

Conclusion: The Raven and the Pigeon in Each of Us

Both coexist within us: the crow who desires what is not his, who is willing to pretend to get it, who deludes himself that he can deceive the world; and the pigeon that knows its place, that distrusts easy friendships, that knows when it's time to go.

The Jātaka invites us to recognize these two voices and to choose. Choosing not to be the crow, even when the opportunity presents itself. Choosing to be the pigeon, even when it seems weaker, more renouncing, less winning.

Because in the end, as this story teaches, the crow ends up on the garbage pile, forgotten. And the pigeon flies away into the open sky, free.

And freedom, as we know, is the only real treasure.

This is how the story of the Kapota-Jātaka, the twin of the Baka, ends, different in form but identical in substance: greed destroys, wisdom saves. May the pigeon live in each of us.

Scene 2 (The Foolish Action and the Disproportionate Reaction): The Makasa-Jātaka (44) and the Rohiṇī-Jātaka (45).

Value at stake: The intention (however good) against the real effect.

Analysis: These two twin Jātakas show pure stupidity. The son who kills his father to crush a mosquito, and the other who strikes him with a pestle, completely ignore the principle of proportionality and value. Their "vision" is so narrow (only the mosquito, only the nuisance) that they do not see the context (the father). It is causality in its most brutal form: insane action = catastrophic consequence.

Video post blogger

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/makasa-jataka-44-rohini-jataka-45.html

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/makasa-jataka-44-rohini-jataka-45-when.html

https://youtu.be/AV33vud_gBA

Makasa-Jātaka (44)

Introduction

The Buddha, the Awakened One, traveled with his monks through the lands of Magadha, in a distant time. On that alms-giving journey, they came to a village lost in the hills, a place that seemed forgotten by wisdom and populated only by fools. A great commotion agitated the inhabitants, and the air was full of lamentations. The Master, seeing wounded and bruised men scattered everywhere, asked the reason for so much pain to the few wise men of the place who had come to pay homage to him. Their answer offered the opportunity to tell an ancient story, a story of crooked intentions and tragic consequences, where a tiny insect became the cause of a huge disaster.

Chapter 1: The Mosquito Warriors

Confusion reigned in the village. The men, gathered in the square the day before, had argued animatedly.

"Friends," one of them had shouted, his face marked by the stings, "our work in the forest has become impossible! Mosquitoes devour us alive! We can no longer cut down a tree in peace. We must declare war on them!"

The idea, however crazy, was received with enthusiasm. "Yes, war! Let's take bows and arrows, axes and sticks! We'll go into the jungle and exterminate them all, with arrows and spears!"

So, armed to the teeth, the foolish villagers entered the forest. But just as they were in the trees, the buzzing of mosquitoes drove them crazy. Instead of aiming at the insects, fast and tiny, they began to strike blindly, and their shots hit the target... on their own comrades. "Take this!" cried one, and his axe wounded his arm. "To you!" shouted another, and an arrow stuck in his leg. The battle against the mosquitoes turned into carnage between them, and in no time at all, the village was filled with wounded and whining.

Chapter 2: The Carpenter and the Mosquito

It was then that the Blessed, having arrived at the entrance of the village, asked for enlightenment on the massacre. The few wise men, after offering food to the community of monks, told what had happened.

The Master smiled sadly and said, "These fools are not new to such follies. In the past, to hit a mosquito, you ended up hitting a man." And, sitting in the shade of a large tree, he began to tell.

"In a distant time, when Brahmadatta reigned in Benares, I was a merchant and traveled from village to village. One day I came to a community of carpenters. There, an old craftsman with a bald head shining like a copper bowl, was planing a wooden plank. On the back of his neck, a mosquito had landed and, with its sharp sting, pierced him. The old man, feeling the pain, turned to his son, a robust young man who worked not far away. "My son," he said, "there is a mosquito tormenting my head. Kick her out, please."

Chapter 3: One Shot

The son, a simple young man and perhaps not too intelligent, approached his father's back. He held a heavy axe, razor-sharp.

"Stand still, father," he said reassuringly. "One shot and it will be done. I'll kill her in an instant."

The old carpenter, confident, lowered his head and remained motionless. The son, with the purest and most concentrated intention, raised the axe aloft. His aim was not for his father's head, but for the tiny mosquito perched on it. With a precise and powerful slash, he lowered the axe.

The merchant, who was sitting there as a guest, saw everything with his own eyes. He saw the axe cut through the air and, instead of crushing the insect, split the poor carpenter's skull in two. The old man fell to the ground dead instantly, killed by the hand of his son who only wanted to help him.

Chapter 4: The Merchant's Lesson

A dead silence descended on the shop. The son looked at the axe, then at the father, his eyes full of horror and disbelief. He had killed his dearest person by mistake, in an attempt to protect him from a simple sting.

The merchant rose to his feet and looked at the scene with compassion. He addressed himself and the few present, and spoke words that would become an eternal teaching:

"Better a wise and prudent enemy,

than a friend devoid of intellect.

Look at the son: to kill an insect,

he smashed his relative's head."

With that, the merchant gathered his belongings and left the village, taking with him the image of that terrible lesson: intention, if not accompanied by wisdom, can be deadlier than the fiercest hatred.

Conclusion

The Master finished his story and looked at his disciples. "You see, monks, how stupidity, even when it is moved by affection, can cause irreparable damage. Those villagers of today, like the carpenter's son of old, have mistaken the target, hitting their fellow men instead of the real enemy. The real war is not against mosquitoes or the small annoyances of life, but against the ignorance that clouds the mind. Only wisdom allows us to distinguish the real enemy from the imaginary one, and to act accordingly without causing suffering to ourselves and others."

Thus the Blessed One enlightened the minds of those present, showing that the way to liberation from pain passes through knowledge and right intention, and not through rash and senseless actions.

Rohiṇī-Jātaka (45)

Introduction

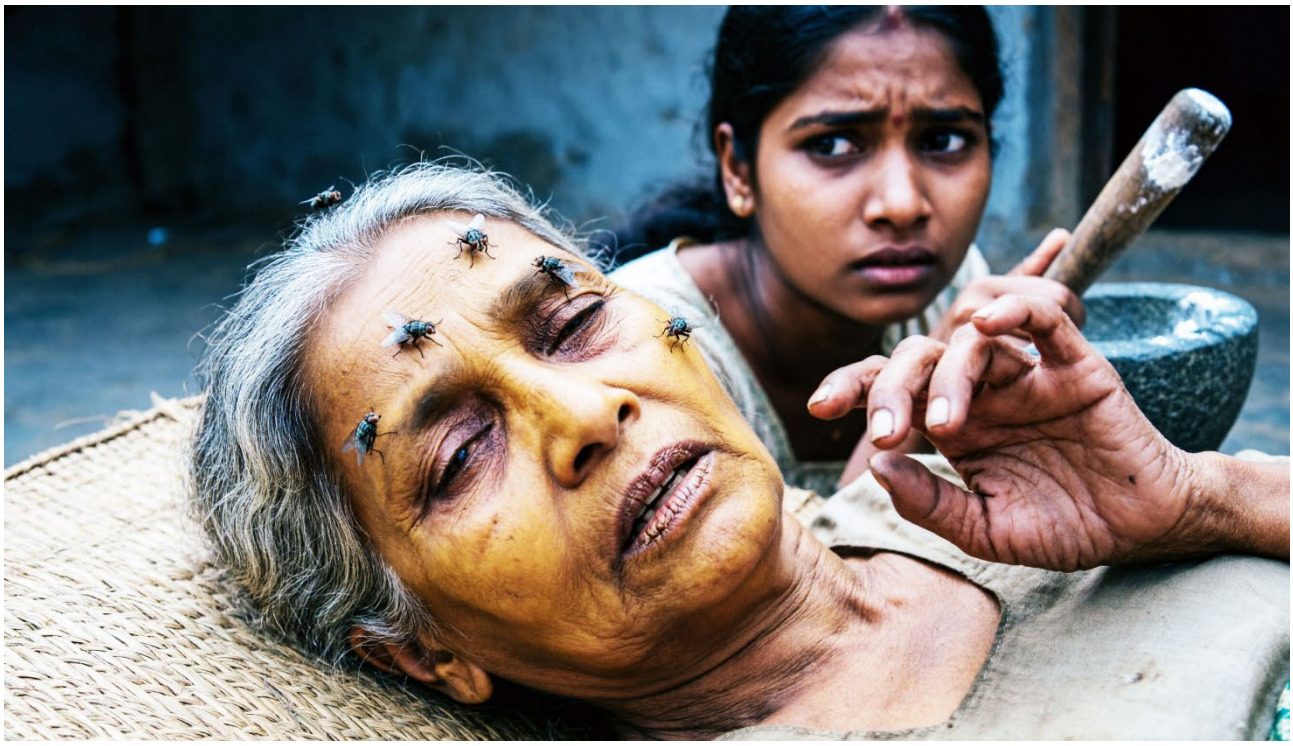
In the forest of Jetavana, where the Buddha stayed offering his teaching, a faithful disciple named Anāthapiṇḍika, the Great Treasurer, arrived one day with a face marked by sadness. A tragedy had just happened in his own home, a misfortune as absurd as it was painful. The Master, seeing his illustrious follower so disturbed, invited him to tell what had happened. And the story he heard was so singular and full of teaching, that the Awakened One decided to reveal its deep roots, by narrating an event of the distant past, where filial love, devoid of wisdom, had produced the same, identical, bitter fruit.

Chapter 1: The Pestle Room

In the great mansion of Anāthapiṇḍika, the servants were numerous and each had his own duties. Among them was a young woman named Rohiṇī, a girl with a simple heart but a mind unaccustomed to reflection. That day, as always, she was pounding rice in a large stone mortar, forcefully lifting and lowering a heavy wooden pestle. Dull and rhythmic noise filled the room.

On the floor, next to her, her mother, now old and tired, had laid down to rest. It was a habit, to stay close to his daughter while she worked, to enjoy her company. The old lady, however, was annoyed by a swarm of flies which, attracted by the smell of rice and the heat of the room, landed on her continuously, pricking her like needles.

Chapter 2: A Fatal Order



"My daughter," murmured the old woman, pushing a fly from her forehead with a tired hand. "These flies give me no respite. They sting me everywhere. Throw them away from me, I beg you."

Rohiṇī, interrupting his work, looked at his mother. He saw flies perched on his body. He saw the annoyance on the old woman's face. And in his simple, devoted heart a wave of love and protection was born.

"Don't worry, mother," she said firmly, clutching the heavy pestle tighter. "Now I'll kick them out. They won't sting you anymore."

He approached his mother, raised the pestle upwards, aiming carefully at the point where the flies were thickest. His intent was pure: he wanted to kill insects, to free his mother from that torment.

Chapter 3: The Axe and the Mosquito, the Pestle and the Mother

With a cry of determination, "I'll kill you!" he lowered the pestle with all his might. But the blow, instead of crushing the small flies, fell on the head of the lying mother. There was a dull, terrible thud, different from the sound of laughter in the mortar. The old woman let out a slight sigh and remained motionless.

Rohiṇī looked at the pestle in his hand. He looked at his mother. Blood began to form a small trickle on the floor. The reality of what she had done exploded in her mind with unprecedented violence.

"Mother! Oh, mother!" he cried, dropping the pestle and throwing himself on the inert body. His cries of pain and despair echoed throughout the house, bringing the news of the tragedy to the ears of his master, Anāthapiṇḍika.

Chapter 4: Twice the Same Story

The Great Treasurer, distraught, had the body of the old woman burned according to the rites and sought comfort and understanding from the Master, telling him what had happened.

The Buddha listened silently, then spoke in a calm, deep voice: "This is not the first time, householder, that Rohiṇī, in his zeal to kill flies on his mother, has killed her with a pestle. The exact same thing happened in a distant time. The madness of love without wisdom repeats itself identically through the cycles of existence."

And, at the request of Anāthapiṇḍika, the Master told the story of the past.

At that distant time, in Benares, the Bodhisatta was himself a Great Treasurer. Also in his house lived a servant named Rohiṇī. And one day, while the young woman was busy pounding rice, her mother, lying next to her, begged her to chase away the flies. And Rohiṇī, with the exact same pure intention and the exact same crazy gesture, lifted the pestle and struck his mother to death, and then burst into tears on her body.

Then the Bodhisatta, who witnessed the scene, had spoken words of eternal wisdom:

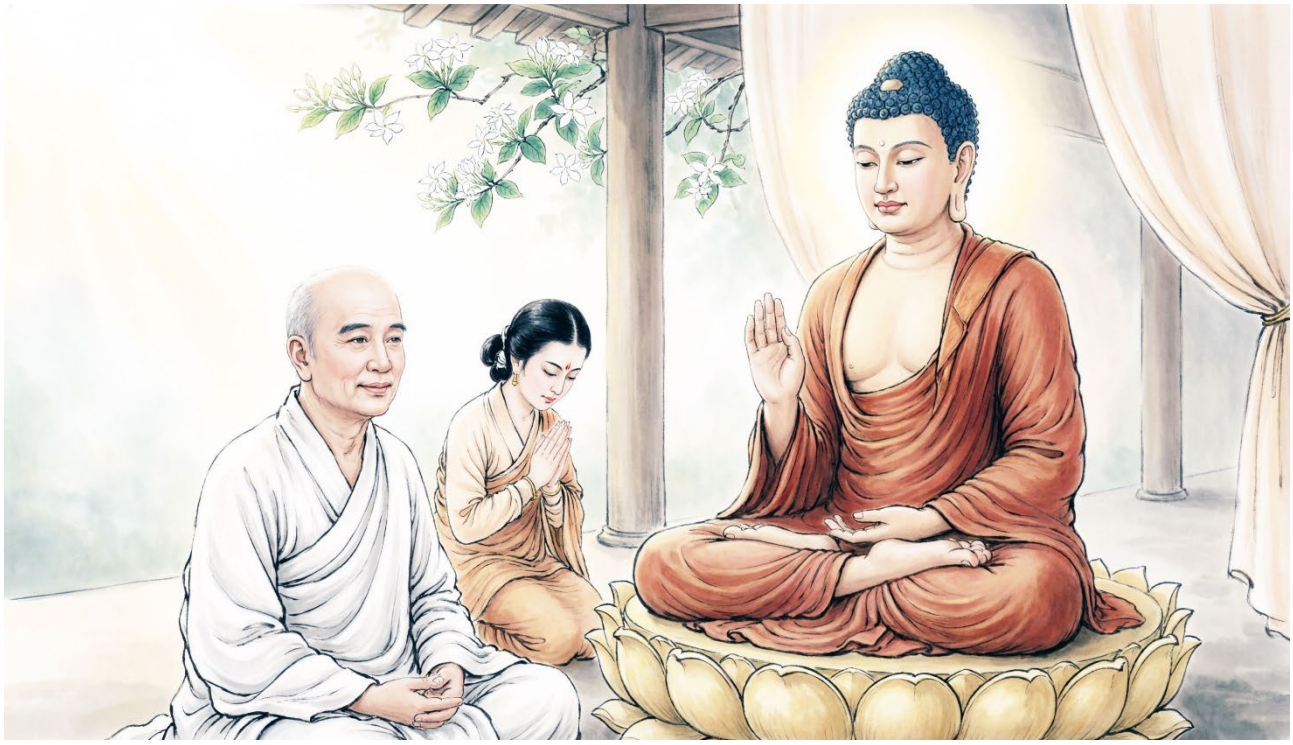
"Better a wise and prudent enemy,

than a friend devoid of intellect.

Look at the girl: to hunt an insect,

he killed his mother, and now he mourns her in her grief."

Conclusion



"You see, disciples," the Buddha concluded, looking at Anāthapiṇḍika and the assembled monks, "how the intention, even the most loving, if not enlightened by wisdom, can be transformed into an instrument of destruction. The daughter of today and the daughter of the past are the same soul, trapped in the same error, just as the mother of today is the same mother of then. The wheel of saṃsāra turns, and the same stories repeat themselves, until one learns to distinguish between blind love and wise love. True compassion is not only a movement of the heart, but a light of the mind, which knows what is the right gesture to make and when to hold it."

Thus the Blessed led domestic tragedy back to a universal teaching, showing that the way to liberation passes through knowledge, the only one capable of transforming an impulse of love into an act of true salvation.

Unique Conclusion for the Two Twins: Makasa and Rohiṇī

And so, two stories as old as humanity still speak to us today with the same force as two thousand five hundred years ago. On one side the carpenter's son with his axe, on the other Rohiṇī with his pestle. Two identical gestures moved by love, two identical tragedies generated by the same lack: the absence of wisdom.

The Buddha, by telling these two stories one after the other, wanted to trace a deep furrow in the minds of his disciples. He wanted them to remember: pure intention is not enough. It is not enough to love, it is not enough to want to protect, it is not enough to act with enthusiasm. If the mind is not enlightened by knowledge, love itself can turn into a blade that wounds the very people we would like to defend.

Today, in our fast-paced and hyper-connected contemporary culture, these twin Jātakas resonate with unexpected power.

How often, in fact, do we also wield our daily axes and pestles against invisible enemies? How many times, animated by the best intentions, do we strike what we love?

Think of parents who, in order to protect their children from every difficulty (the "mosquitoes" of life), deprive them of the resilience necessary to face the world, and hurt them without wanting to. Think of the avalanche of messages and consensus that we pour on social media, believing that we offer love and connection, while we often feed addiction and loneliness. We think of the haste with which we judge, share, get indignant, convinced that we are fighting injustice, without realizing that we are hitting people in flesh and blood.

Our tools have changed: they are no longer iron axes or wooden pestles, but sharp words, impulsive likes, rash sharing, anxieties for control. The dynamic, however, is the same: action without awareness produces pain.

The lesson of the two twin Jātakas is a universal and timeless invitation: to stop for a moment before acting. To ask himself: "Am I really seeing what I have in front of me? Is my solution proportionate to the problem? Is my love really smart?"

Because the real enemy, these stories teach us, is not the mosquito on the old man's head or the fly on the mother's face. The real enemy is within us: it is the unexamined impulse, the haste to resolve, the presumption of always knowing what the good of the other is.

Wisdom, on the contrary, is that light that allows us to distinguish. To see the difference between an insect and a head, between a nuisance and a life, between an imaginary emergency and a precious reality to be preserved.

Today, more than ever, we need that light. In an age that pushes us to immediate reaction, to instant indignation, to intervention at all costs, the Buddha's lesson whispers in our ear: stop, observe, understand. Then, perhaps, take action.

And if you really have to strike, strike the ignorance within you. That is the only enemy that really deserves battle.

Because, after all, the story of the carpenter and that of Rohiṇī are not about flies or mosquitoes. They talk about us. They speak of the thin line that separates a gesture of love from a mortal wound. And they remind us that crossing that line with awareness is the highest art of being human.

Praise be to the wisdom that transforms love into care, and impulse into understanding.

Scene 3 (Ingratitude as Long-Term Blindness): The Veḷuka-Jātaka (43).

Value at stake: Trust and respect for natural boundaries.

Analysis: The man who breeds the viper is ignorant of the intrinsic nature of things (dhamma). He believes that the goodness of the treatment can change the essence. The consequence (the fatal bite) is not a punishment, but the simple reaffirmation of the violated nature. It is a warning about the danger of projecting one's qualities onto others.

Veḷuka-Jātaka (43)

A story inspired by Veḷuka-Jātaka (43), structured in chapters and linked to the theme of ingratitude as blindness in the long term.

Post video blogger

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/veluka-jataka-43-la-vipera-e-leremita.html

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/veluka-jataka-43-viper-and-stubborn.html

https://youtu.be/8NF4wclJP3Y

Introduction

There is a subtle form of blindness that does not affect the eyes, but the mind. It is the inability to see the deep nature of things, their immutable essence. Often, blinded by our desire or our goodness, we believe that we can change what is unchanging, that we can tame what is wild, that we can bind to ourselves what follows only our instinct. This ancient story tells of a man who chose to ignore nature, projecting his kind heart onto a creature that kindness could neither understand nor reciprocate. His mistake was not love, but the illusion that love can rewrite the laws of the world. And it reminds us that trust, when it does not respect natural boundaries, can turn into a death trap, where ingratitude is not malice, but the simple, inevitable reaffirmation of a violated truth.

Chapter 1: The Hermit's Heart

In the cool peaks of the Himalayas, where the air is thin and the silence is broken only by the singing of birds and the rustle of the wind in the leaves, once lived a community of wise hermits. They were men who had chosen to abandon the pleasures and torments of the world to seek inner peace. They were guided by a wise and enlightened teacher, the Bodhisatta, a man with a deep understanding of the nature of all things.

Under his guidance, the five hundred disciples lived in simple huts, devoting themselves to meditation and gathering fruits and roots. Among these disciples, there was one with a tender heart, but with a mind that was not inclined to listen to counsel. He was a man who followed his impulses, convinced that his love could embrace everything.

Chapter 2: The Unexpected Guest

One day, while he was alone in his hut, a young venomous snake, a small viper, crawled in search of a refuge. The hermit saw her and, instead of driving her away, he was softened. The animal was small and seemed helpless. His heart was filled with compassion.

'Poor creature,' he murmured, 'you are so lonely and small. I will give you shelter."

He placed it in a large piece of hollow bamboo, which he closed carefully, creating a comfortable home for it. Every day, the hermit fed the snake with some of its food, speaking to it sweetly as if it were a son. Soon, in the community, the hermit was nicknamed "the father of Bamboo", from the name he had given to his unusual pet, and the snake was known as "Bamboo".

The hermit looked at his protégé and saw only docility and gratitude. He didn't see the poison, he didn't see the instinct, he saw only the reflection of his own love.

Chapter 3: The Master's Warning

The news soon reached the ears of the wise Bodhisatta. Worried, he sent for his disciple.

'Is it true, brother, that you keep a poisonous snake with you?' asked the master, in a calm but serious voice.

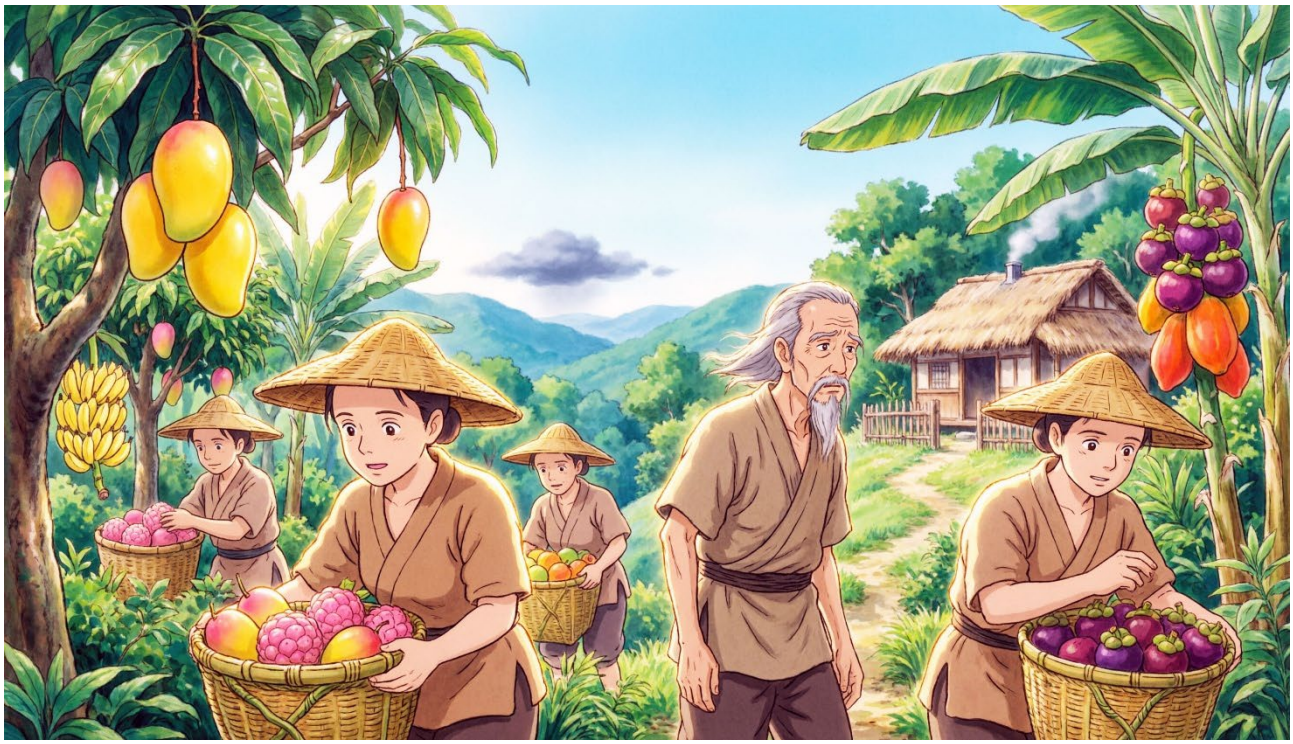
"That's true, master," replied the hermit with a smile. "She is a small creature, harmless and kind. I call him Bamboo and he is as dear to me as a student is to his teacher."

The Bodhisatta shook his head, his eyes full of compassion and concern. "Brother, a snake is always a snake. His nature is in his poison, not in your goodness. You can treat him with love for years, but his instincts will remain unchanged. Don't trust him. Your misplaced trust, which does not respect its true nature, could cost you your life. Listen to my advice: let him go, away from you."

But the hermit, stubborn, shook his head. "Maestro, you don't know him. My Bamboo is different. With me he is tame. He could never hurt me."

The Bodhisatta sighed. He had said what he had to say. The choice now rested with the disciple, who was blinded by his own feeling. He had warned him, but he knew that nature, when forced, always finds a way to reassert itself.

Chapter 4: The Day of the Harvest



The days passed peacefully. Then, the time came when all the hermits decided to go into the forest for several days, to collect particular fruits that grew in abundance in a distant valley. "The father of Bamboo" joined them, but before leaving, he secured his beloved snake well in his bamboo, leaving him some food, certain that everything would be fine.

For two or three days, the community reaped the fruits, enjoying the bounty of the forest. But in the lonely hut, closed in his bamboo, Bamboo remained in the dark and without food. Hunger, a primordial need, began to grow, sharpening his oldest instincts. The education received by man was only a thin layer on top of a nature of pure survival.

When the hermit, returning to his hut, remembered his child, the snake's hunger had now become a blind fury.

Chapter 5: Nature Reasserts Itself

With his heart full of affection, the man approached the bamboo. He opened the opening and reached inside, calling in a soft voice: "Come, my son. You must be so hungry. Come to me."

In the darkness of the bamboo, the outstretched hand did not represent affection. To the senses clouded by the snake's hunger, it was only warmth and movement, the long-awaited prey. In a flash, faster than thought, Bamboo struck. His small teeth sank into the hand that had fed him for months, injecting his lethal venom.

A strangled cry, a moment of disbelief in the hermit's eyes, and then the poison ran its course. He collapsed to the ground, dead instantly. His confidence, his blindness to the true nature of things, had killed him. Bamboo, free, slipped out of the bamboo and disappeared into the thick of the forest, following his instincts, without regrets, without gratitude or ingratitude, simply being what he was.

Conclusion

The other hermits, finding the lifeless body of their companion, ran to the master, and brought the sad news. The Bodhisatta, after having cremated the body according to the rite, gathered all the disciples. His face was serious, marked by a deep but not surprised sadness. He had seen the tragedy he had prophesied unfold.

"Disciples," he said, "this is the fate of the stubborn. Of those who, urged by wise friends who give kind advice, do not listen. Like the 'father of Bamboo', he is reduced to nothing."

And he brought this teaching: the hermit's fault was not love, but the presumption of being able to change the intrinsic nature of things, the dhamma. He had believed that his goodness could rewrite the laws of instinct. The bite of the snake was not a divine punishment, nor an act of deliberate ingratitude. It was simply nature that, violated in its essence, reasserted itself, cruel but true. Bamboo's ingratitude was, in reality, the long-term blindness of man, who had chosen not to see the natural boundaries that separate his humanity from the wild. Respect for those boundaries is not a lack of love, but the highest form of wisdom.

Relation to contemporary culture

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Centuries later, the lesson of Veḷuka-Jātaka resonates with surprising relevance in our contemporary culture. We live in an age that exalts the belief that everything is malleable, that love, technology, law or individual will can reshape any reality. We see this in toxic relationships, where people continue to invest affection in narcissistic or manipulative partners, convinced that their dedication can eventually "heal" or change them. The "poison" of their nature is ignored, projecting onto them qualities that they do not possess, to the point of being morally or emotionally annihilated.

We see this in the relationship with technology and artificial intelligence, where we tend to humanize machines and algorithms, attributing intentions, feelings and even loyalty to them. We forget that, however sophisticated, they follow a code, a binary "instinct" that knows no gratitude. Blindly entrusting them with our choices, our privacy or our social relationships, without respecting their intrinsically different nature, can turn out to be a gamble whose "bite" could be manipulation, addiction or the loss of our humanity.

Finally, we see it in our relationship with the environment. For centuries we have believed that we can "domesticate" the planet, to bend nature to our desires, ignoring its limits and laws. We have arrogantly violated its boundaries, and today nature, like the viper, is reasserting its power. Climate change, pandemics, extreme events are not a "punishment", but the inevitable consequence of having forced the hand of a system that has its own rules. It is nature that takes back what is hers, biting the hand that challenged her.

Contemporary culture, obsessed with control and personalization, would do well to rediscover the ancient wisdom of respect for natural boundaries. Not everything is negotiable. Not everything can be transformed

by affection or will. Recognizing the profound nature of things, people and systems, and learning to relate to it with humility and awareness, is perhaps the only antidote to avoid ending up like the "father of Bamboo" once again.

Overall conclusion of Level 1 and transition to Level 2

CONCLUSION OF LEVEL 1: The Poison of the Ego – Greed and Deception as Blindness

The red thread that unites the three scenes

The three scenes of Level 1 – with their five Jātakas – compose a powerful and articulated fresco of the multiple forms in which the "poison of the ego" manifests itself as blindness. Let's look at them as a whole.

Scene 1 – The Predatory Deception: The Baka-Jātaka (38) and the Kapota-Jātaka (42)

In this first scene, the ego manifests itself in its most active and deliberate form: deception as a strategy of survival and oppression.

In the Baka-Jātaka, the heron – a fake saint, a false ascetic – deceives the fish with promises of salvation in order to devour them. It is hypocrisy elevated to a system: appearances of virtue become the tool for the predator. The crab, however, unmasks the deception and restores balance, showing that nature – when respected – contains within itself the antibodies against lies.

In the Kapota-Jātaka, the raven attempts to infiltrate the kitchen by imitating the virtues of the dove, but its true being – violent and predatory – betrays it. He cannot change nature just by wearing a mask. The wise pigeon recognizes this.

Unifying Theme: Predatory deception is blindness to one's own nature (the heron and raven believe they can hide what they are) and to the nature of others (they underestimate the wisdom of the crab and pigeon).

Scene 2 – The Foolish Action and the Disproportionate Reaction: The Makasa-Jātaka (44) and the Rohiṇī-Jātaka (45)

In this second scene, the ego manifests itself not as deliberate malice, but as reactive stupidity and lack of measure.

In Makasa-Jātaka, a man wants to kill a mosquito perched on his father's head. He hits too hard and kills his father. It is the tragic consequence of a disproportionate reaction: anger and frustration cloud the mind to the point of not calculating the consequences.

In Rohiṇī-Jātaka, the daughter, seeing flies on her sleeping mother, kills her mother with the pestle instead of flies. Here, too, the emotional impulse – the sense of inadequacy – produces a violent and destructive reaction.

Unifying Theme: Foolish action and disproportionate reaction are blindness to the consequences of one's actions. You can't see beyond the immediate impulse. The wounded ego reacts without thinking, and the damage becomes irreparable.

Scene 3 – Ingratitude as Long-Term Blindness: The Veḷuka-Jātaka (43)

In this third scene, we reach the climax of the path. Here blindness becomes radical, ontological.

The hermit is not evil, he is not predatory, he does not react impulsively. On the contrary: he acts out of love. But it is a blind love, which does not see the intrinsic nature of the object of its affection. The viper is poisonous by essence, not by choice. The hermit projects his human qualities onto her – gratitude, fidelity, the ability to reciprocate affection – and refuses to listen to those who tell him that he is violating a natural boundary.

When the viper, after days of hunger, bites the hand that feeds it, it does not do so out of ingratitude. It does so because violated nature reasserts itself. Man dies because of his inability to see things for what they are.

Unifying theme: Ingratitude as blindness is the deepest form of illusion: it is not a question of not seeing the future or the consequences, but of not seeing the essence. It is the belief that love can rewrite the laws of the universe.

The common denominator: the three poisons and the ego at the center

If we look at the path as a whole, we notice a precise evolution:

Scene	**Jātaka**	**Form of Blindness**	**Manifestation of the Self**
Scene 1	Baka (38) and Kapota (42)	Blindness to one's own and others' nature (deception)	Me wearing masks to overwhelm
Scene 2	Makasa (44) and Rohiṇī (45)	Blindness to the consequences (disproportionate reaction)	Wounded me reacting without thinking
Scene 3	Veḷuka (43)	Blindness to the essence of things (ingratitude)	Loving self-projecting self

The common denominator is the "I" that puts itself at the center:

- In Scene 1, the predatory ego believes itself to be smarter than the others

- In Scene 2, the wounded ego believes itself authorized to react without limits

- In Scene 3, the loving self believes itself capable of changing nature with affection

In all three cases, the ego is the imaginary center around which reality should revolve. And in all three cases, reality – sooner or later – takes back its spaces.

The Level 1 lesson

This first level showed us that:

- Predatory deception (Scene 1) blinds us to our true nature and that of others

- Foolish action and disproportionate reaction (Scene 2) blind us to the consequences of our actions

- Ingratitude as profound blindness (Scene 3) blinds us to the immutable essence of things

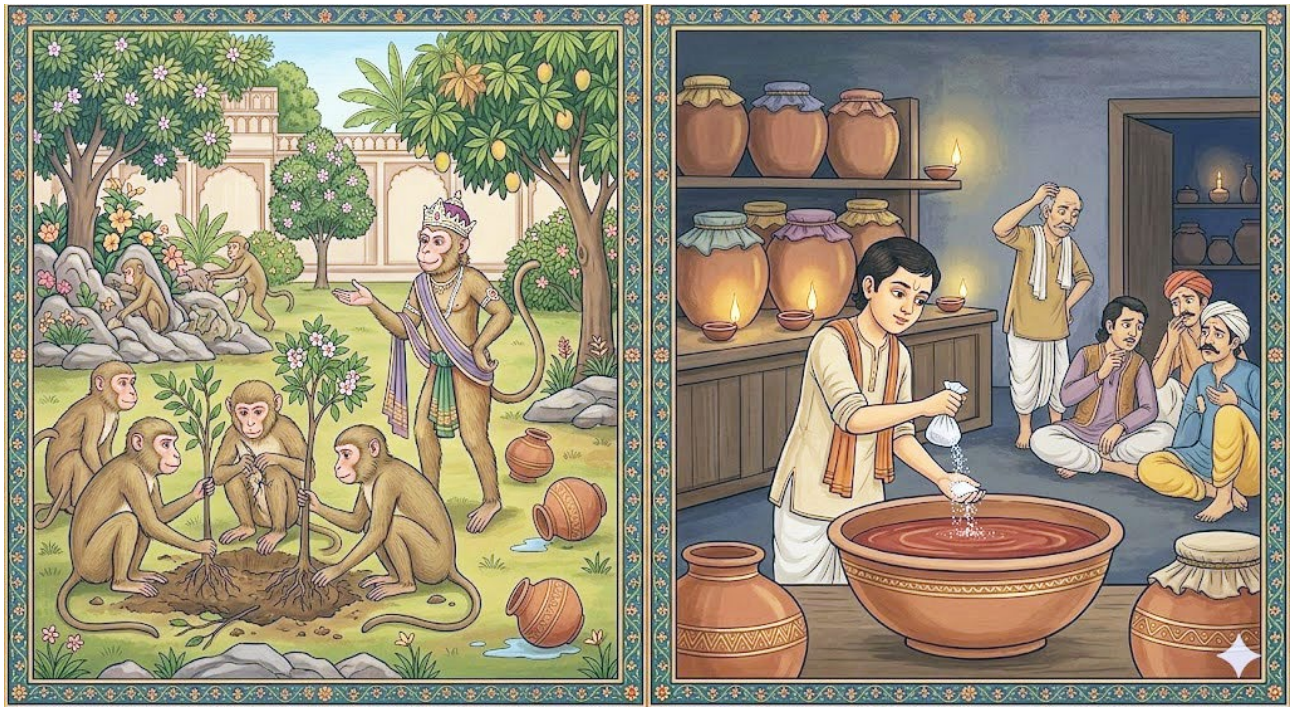
All three forms of blindness share a common root: the poison of the ego, that subtle belief that reality must bend to our desires, that the rules of the world are negotiable, that we can be exceptions to nature.

The Veḷuka-Jātaka leaves us with a powerful warning that acts as a bridge to the next level: violated nature always reasserts itself. But what happens when it is not wild nature that is violated, but a human rule? What happens when the error does not lie in the object of the action, but in the method by which the action is performed?

Level 2: The Short Circuit of the Mind - The Incorrect Application of a Rule

In this level, the protagonists are not evil, but "stupid" in a cognitive sense. They apply correct logic to the wrong context, causing enormous damage. Ignorance of "how" to do things becomes destructive.

Scene 4 (The Methodological Error): The Ārāmadūsaka-Jātaka (46) and the Vāruṇi-Jātaka (47).



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https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/aramadusaka-jataka-46-e-varuni-jataka.html

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Value at stake: The understanding of the root cause versus superficial appearance.

Analysis: Monkeys who uproot trees to see the roots and water them better make a fatal logical error: they confuse analysis with action. The apprentice who puts salt in the alcoholic beverage sees the effect (customers love salt) but not the cause (the thirst stimulus), and generalizes incorrectly. In both cases, the lack of a systemic understanding (how a garden works, how an organism works) leads to disaster.

In the second level of our journey through the pitfalls of the mind, we explore the phenomenon of mental "short-circuiting": that moment when a valid principle, applied without discernment, turns into its opposite, generating chaos instead of order, giving instead of benefit. In Scene 4, dedicated to Methodological Error, we delve into the heart of this paradox: the literal and mechanical application of a rule, regardless of the understanding of the context and purpose for which that rule exists.

The two Jātakas that make up this scene, the Ārāmadūsaka-Jātaka (46) and the Vāruṇi-Jātaka (47), are twins in their teaching. Both illustrate how a seemingly good intention or technically correct instruction can produce disastrous results if executed by a mind that does not possess the wisdom to adapt the method to reality. In the first, the rule is "water the plants according to the depth of the roots", and it is applied by uprooting each sapling to watch its roots. In the second, the rule is "do not mix," and it is applied with such zeal that it ruins entire batches of goods. In both cases, there is a lack of understanding of the "why" behind the "how". The methodological error is precisely this: the replacement of situational intelligence with slavish execution, which transforms an instrument of care into an agent of destruction.

The Monkey Who Killed the Garden

(Ārāmadūsaka-Jātaka - Jātaka 46)

Introduction

In a village in the kingdom of Kosala, the Master, during his usual round of almsgiving, was invited to lunch by a rich landowner. After the meal, the host allowed the monks to walk in his beautiful garden. It was there that the brothers noticed a strange spacing: a completely bare area, devoid of trees, in the midst of lush vegetation. The gardener, when questioned, told the story of a boy from the village who, in charge of watering, had torn up all the young trees and then given them water according to the size of the roots. The trees were dead. On hearing this, the Master smiled and said, "It is not the first time, brothers, that this boy has destroyed a garden. The same happened in the past." And so, he enlightened their minds with an ancient story.

Chapter 1: The Party in the City

A long time ago, when Brahmadatta reigned in Benares, a great festival was announced in the city. The roll of festive drums echoed through the streets, and the crowds, colorful and excited, poured out of the houses to enjoy the feast days. Even the royal gardener, guardian of the king's magnificent park, felt the call of the celebration. But his duty held him back: hundreds of young trees and flowering plants needed water.

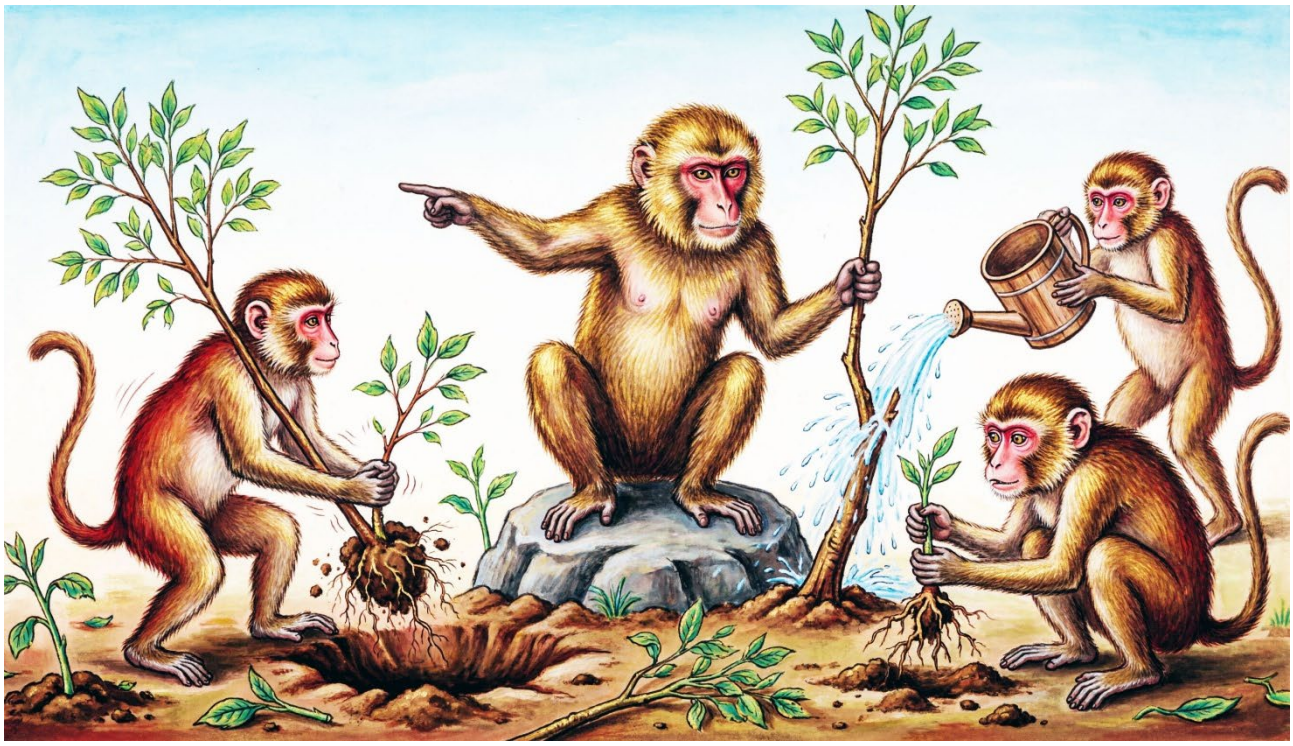
Looking at the large group of monkeys that lived in the garden, an idea germinated in his mind. "Here's the solution!" he thought. "Why waste this opportunity? The monkeys can look after the garden for a day." He approached the monkeys' leader, a wise-looking but vacuous-eyed old macaque, and in a mellifluous tone began to sing the praises of their home.

'O noble chief,' said the gardener, 'you and your people enjoy these fruits, flowers, and young shoots by my care. Today, however, the city is celebrating and I want to participate in it. If you and your followers would water the young plants in my absence, you would do me a great favor."

The chief of the monkeys, flattered by the importance of the task, accepted with a solemn nod of the head. "You can count on us, gardener. Go and enjoy."

The gardener, confident, gave them the water skins and the large wooden pots for watering, recommended not to waste water and ran away towards the sound of the drums, towards the party.

Chapter 2: The Perfect Method



The monkeys, left alone, took possession of the tools with great seriousness. They began to run here and there, pouring water almost everywhere, without criteria. It was then that their king, observing the scene, beat his forehead with his hairy hand.

"Stop! Stop everyone!" he shouted with authority. "You're wasting water! The gardener has entrusted us with an important task and we must carry it out intelligently. We have to use a method, a precise rule."

The monkeys gathered around him, awaiting the revelation. The king, puffed up with self-proclaimed wisdom, explained his plan: "Listen. In order not to waste a single drop, we must adapt the amount of water to the needs of each plant. And how can we understand the need for a plant? From its roots! Those with deep roots need a lot of water, those with small roots need little."

The monkeys nodded, struck by their ruler's iron logic. But a question arose spontaneously: "And how do we see the roots, O king?"

The monkey king smiled, satisfied with his cunning. "It's simple, fools. To see the roots, you have to uproot the plant. Then, calmly, you will observe their size. At that point, you will put them back in the ground and water according to the rule: lots of water for the large roots, little for the small ones. That way, we won't waste a single drop!"

Chapter 3: The Wisdom of the Fool

Enthusiastic about the ingenious plan, the monkeys set to work. One by one, they grabbed the young saplings, tore them out of the soft soil, carefully examined the roots, and replanted them as best they could. Then, true to the rule, they poured rivers of water on those with longer roots and a few drops on those with tiny roots. The garden, from a place of order and beauty, soon became a battlefield of loose earth and unsteady plants.

At that moment, a wise man, a minister of the king, was walking near the garden. Attracted by the strange agitation, he approached and saw the surreal scene: monkeys tearing up trees with commitment and seriousness, and then watering them. He couldn't believe his eyes.

'What are you doing, friends?' he asked, turning to one of the monkeys.

Tired and soiled with the earth, but proud of her duty, the monkey answered, "We are following the method taught us by our king. We water each plant according to the size of its roots, so as not to waste water."

The sage looked at the trees already bent and dying, the leaves withering in the sun, and understood the enormity of the error. A laudable intention, an apparently logical method, but applied with such total stupidity as to be catastrophic. He sighed deeply.

'Oh, misplaced intelligence!' he murmured to himself. Then, looking at the king of the monkeys, who watched the scene with a smug air, he declaimed aloud the truth that burned like the sun on the dying garden:

"It is knowledge that crowns effort with success,

for fools, even if they want to do good, are hindered by their own folly.

Here is the proof: the monkey who killed the trees in the garden."

With this, the wise man departed, leaving the monkeys to their tragic and methodical work, unable to understand how their diligence had been the mother of so much destruction.

Conclusion

The Master finished his story and looked at the monks. "You see, brothers," he said, "ignorance is not just not knowing. Sometimes, it is worse: it is knowing something and applying it without understanding it, it is following the rule forgetting the purpose. That boy from the village who destroyed the garden was, in that distant life, the king of the monkeys. And I, who saw the folly of his method, was the wise man."

The short circuit of the mind had been accomplished: a rule designed to preserve life had become, at the hands of a zealous but unwise executor, the instrument of its destruction. The methodological error does not lie in the method, but in the mind that applies it without seeing the totality, forgetting that every rule lives only in the context that generated it.

Vāruṇi-Jātaka (47)

Level 2: The Short Circuit of the Mind - The Incorrect Application of a Rule

Scene 4: The Methodological Error

Introduction: Two Sides of the Same Coin

If in the Ārāmadūsaka-Jātaka we have witnessed the destruction of a garden at the hands of overzealous monkeys, in the Vāruṇi-Jātaka we are faced with a twin error, which is consumed not among the trees of a park, but among the barrels of a tavern. The scenario changes, but the mental mechanism is identical: a literal and obtuse application of a rule observed superficially.

In the first account, the monkeys saw human customers watering the plants and, wanting to imitate them, came up with a "perfect method" that required uprooting the trees to look at their roots. In the second story, an apprentice tavern keeper watches customers add salt to the drink and, with the same distorted logic, decides to incorporate salt directly into the mixture, ruining the entire batch. In both cases, the observation is correct, but the inference is catastrophic. It is the short circuit of the mind that transforms a punctual observation into a universal rule applied without discernment, forgetting that context is an essential part of knowledge.

The Apprentice Who Ruined Wine

Vāruṇi-Jātaka - Jātaka 47

Chapter 1: The Tavern Keeper and the Apprentice

In the time when the Bodhisatta was the Treasurer of Benares, a rich and powerful minister of finance to the king, there lived under his protection a tavern-keeper. He ran a renowned wine and spirits shop, frequented by merchants, travelers and inhabitants of the city. Its fame came from the quality of its blends, prepared with care and patience following ancient recipes handed down from generation to generation.

One day, the tavern keeper prepared a new batch of palm wine, a strong and prized drink that required perfect fermentation. The barrels were ready, the sweet and intoxicating aroma filled the shop, and customers were already beginning to crowd to taste the new supply. Before leaving for the ritual bath, the tavern keeper called his young apprentice, a willing but simple-minded boy, and gave him precise instructions:

"Boy, I have to go. You stay to serve customers. Remember: sell only for cash, no credit. And serve the wine as it is, pure, without adding anything. It's perfect like that."

The apprentice nodded solemnly, puffed up with importance for the responsibility entrusted to him. The tavern keeper walked away, confident.

Chapter 2: The correct interpretation

The shop filled up quickly. The apprentice ran back and forth, pouring wine into earthenware bowls and collecting silver and copper coins. Everything was going well, until something happened that caught his attention.

A group of customers, after receiving the wine, began to call an apprentice who went around the shop with a small basket. "Hey, boy, bring us salt and jagghery!" The apprentice saw those customers take coarse salt and unrefined palm sugar, mix them in a small bowl, and dip small pieces of something in them, eating them as an appetizer between sips.

The apprentice observed the scene, and a light bulb went on in his mind. "Ah! That's the secret!" he thought to himself. "Do these customers add salt to the wine? No, wait... they eat it separately. But maybe it's because our wine is not very tasty. If they feel the need to add salt while drinking, it means that our wine lacks salt! It's clear! My owner didn't think about it, but I discovered a way to improve his recipe."

With this unquestionable logic, the young man rushed to the back of the shop, took a large earthenware bowl, filled it with the precious palm wine and, without hesitation, dissolved a generous handful of coarse salt in it. He stirred thoroughly, tasted the tip of his finger with a satisfied air and grimaced: it was very salty. But his mind interpreted that unpleasant taste as proof that the wine was now "more complete", more suitable for the palate of customers.

Back at the counter, he began to serve the salty wine to the next customers, with a smile of satisfaction.

Chapter 3: The Revelation of the Disaster

The first customer to be served the "improved" wine brought the bowl to his lips, sipped some and immediately spat it all out violently, coughing and spitting.

"What is this?!" he exploded, red in the face. "Have you mixed wine with salt water from the river? It's undrinkable!"

The apprentice, confused, replied in an almost offended tone: "I saw that the other customers added salt while drinking, so I thought of putting it directly in the wine to make it tastier. It's an improvement!"

"An improvement? You're an idiot!" shouted another patron, standing up. "We took salt as an appetizer, to cleanse the palate between sips, not to ruin the drink! You destroyed all the wine!"

One by one, the customers got up, some laughing at the boy's stupidity, others indignant at the wasted wine, and left the shop. In a few minutes, the tavern was deserted, with only the apprentice staring disconsolately at the large bowl of salted wine, now unsellable.

When the tavern keeper returned from the bath, he found the shop empty and the boy with his head down. "Where are all the customers?" he asked. The apprentice, in a trembling voice, told what had happened. The tavern keeper listened, and his expression passed from anger to despondency, then to a sad resignation.

'Fool,' said he at last, 'by your stupidity you have thrown the fruit of my labour to the wind. The desire to do good is not enough; it takes knowledge, it takes understanding."

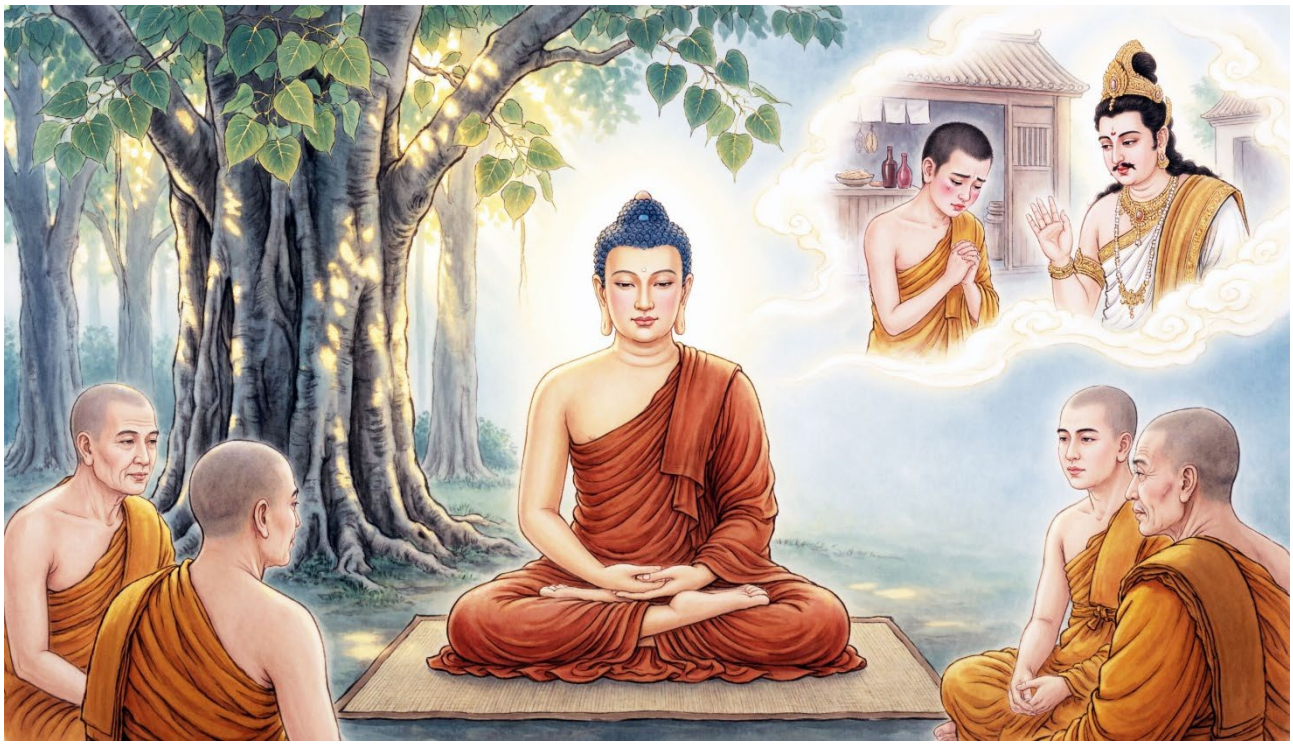
Later, the tavern keeper told what had happened to his protector, the Treasurer of Benares, the Bodhisatta. The latter listened attentively and then spoke words that would become a teaching:

"It is knowledge that crowns effort with success,

for fools, even if they want to do good, are hindered by their own folly.

Here's the proof: Koṇḍañña's bowl of salted wine."

Conclusion: The Perfect Short Circuit



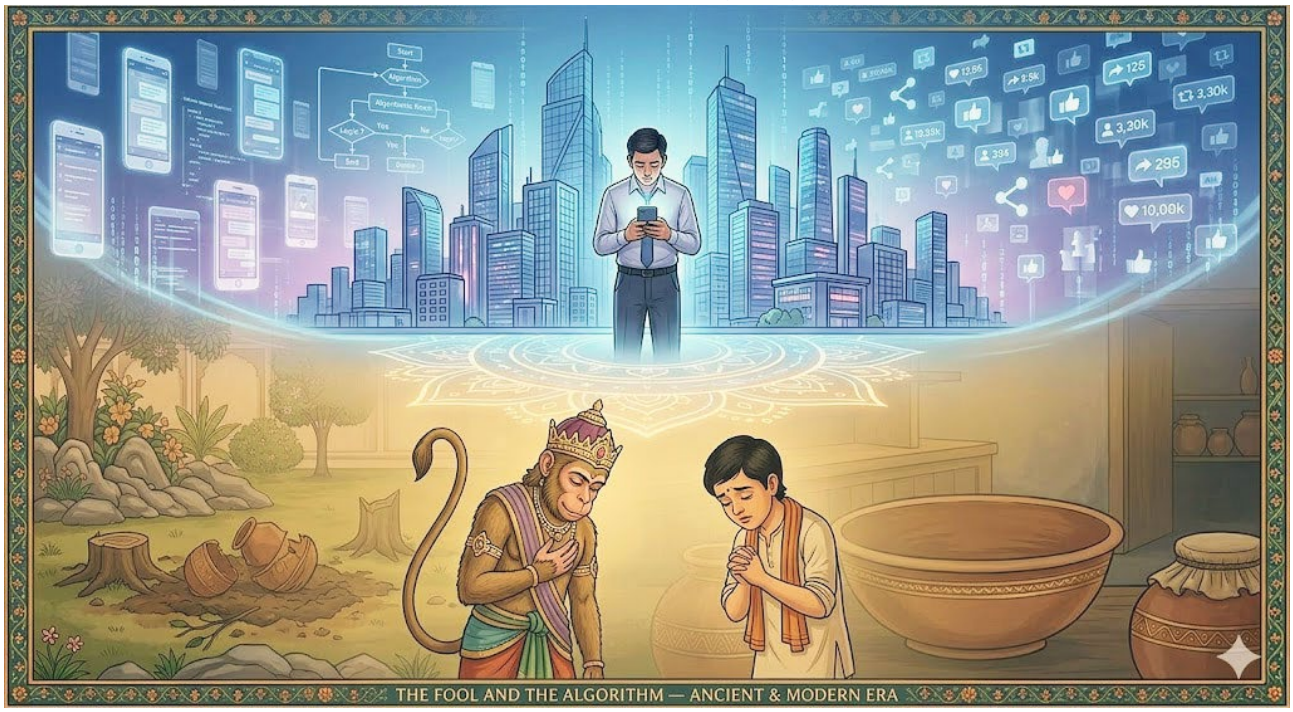
The Master, after telling this story to Anāthapiṇḍika, his generous supporter who had brought the contemporary episode to his attention, smiled and said:

"You see, head of the family, this is not the first time that this apprentice has ruined wine. He already made the exact same mistake in the past. Ignorance knows no time, and the short circuit of the mind repeats itself identically through existences, until wisdom comes to break the cycle."

And just as the monkeys had killed the garden wanting to water it better, the apprentice had ruined the wine wanting to improve it. In both cases, superficial observation had generated a rule, and the literal application of that rule had produced the exact opposite of what was desired. The methodological error is this: confusing the contour with the substance, the accessory with the essential, and applying the same medicine to all bodies without asking whether the disease is the same.

The Bodhisatta concluded by identifying births: "The one who spoiled the wine then is the same one who ruined it today, and I was the Treasurer of Benares at that time."

The Fool and the Algorithm — The Two Jātakas in the Contemporary Era



More than two thousand years after their compilation, the Ārāmadūsaka-Jātaka and the Vāruṇi-Jātaka resonate with an unexpectedly profound power in our present. The monkeys uprooting trees to water them better and the apprentice salting wine to improve it are not simple moral tales of an ancient India: they are archetypes of the methodological error that pervades our age.

We live in the era of literal application. The algorithms of social platforms, designed to maximize engagement, end up polarizing public debate—just like monkeys, they follow a rule ("the more interactions, the better") without understanding its deeper purpose ("cultivating meaningful connections"). The result? Devastated digital gardens, where verbal violence replaces dialogue.

In companies, the phenomenon is endemic. Zealous managers introduce "agile methodologies" or "quality procedures" with the same logic as the apprentice: "I've seen it work there, so I apply the same rule here." They ignore the context, the corporate culture, the people. The employees, like the tavern keeper's customers, walk away frustrated. The wine is salty, the garden is bare.

In bureaucracy, methodological error becomes a daily tragedy. Rules designed to ensure fairness are applied with such rigidity that they negate fairness itself. The employee who refuses an exemption because "the regulations do not provide for it" is the direct descendant of the monkey king: he follows the letter, killing the spirit.

In the world of education, teachers and parents fall into the same trap. They see that the effort produces results, and so they multiply the tasks, extend the timetable, fill the children's time with structured activities. Like monkeys, they "water" more, ignoring that the tree—curiosity, intrinsic motivation—is dying precisely from overwatering.

Even in self-care we observe this short circuit. Crash diets, obsessive fitness routines, toxic productivity: these are all misapplications of partially true rules. "Moving is good" becomes "training until you drop". "Eating healthy" becomes "eliminating entire categories of foods". The apprentice inside us salts the wine of our life believing that he is improving it.

There is a common thread that binds the monkeys of the garden, the tavern keeper's apprentice and contemporary man: the confusion between observation and understanding. We see that something works, but we never ask ourselves why it works. We extrapolate the rule without grasping its context. And so, with the best intentions, we produce the worst results.

The twin Jātakas offer us a way out: the awareness that every rule lives in an ecosystem. Just as the roots of trees need soil, not exposed, and salt needs the palate, not the barrel, so every principle needs the right context to flourish.

In their simplicity, these ancient stories give us a precious warning for the complexity of our time: stop, observe, understand. Don't mechanically apply what you've seen work elsewhere. Always ask yourself, "Am I watering the garden or am I uprooting it? Am I improving the wine or am I ruining it?"

Wisdom lies not in knowing the rule, but in knowing when to apply it, when to adapt it and when—above all—to suspend the rule to listen to reality. This is the short circuit that the two Jātakas teach us to avoid: the mind that transforms a method into an idol, forgetting that the method is only a tool at the service of life.

And perhaps, in an age that idolizes procedures, metrics, and algorithms, rediscovering the ancient lesson of the apes and the apprentice is more urgent than ever: knowledge without understanding is not wisdom, it is just a rule waiting to kill a garden.

Ironic tale

Here is a small ironic tale that blends the two Jātakas into a contemporary and light narrative, keeping their teaching intact.

Business Consulting for Monkeys and Apprentices

Or: How to Ruin Everything with the Best Intentions

An ironic tale in two acts and an epilogue

Act I: The Reunion

It was a spring evening when the Monkey King and the Tavern Keeper's Apprentice met for the first time. It happened in a dream, as often happens at important meetings, or perhaps in that moment suspended between sleep and wakefulness in which the brain desperately tries to make sense of its daily idiocies.

The Monkey King was seated on a makeshift throne made of broken branches, looking regal but vaguely perplexed. Next to him, the Apprentice held a clay bowl with suspicious contents in his hand.

'You,' said the Monkey King, 'look familiar. Isn't it by chance that you too ruined something beautiful trying to improve it?"

The Apprentice sighed. "I salted a whole batch of palm wine. I just wanted to make it tastier. Customers had ordered salt, I thought..." His voice died out in a groan.

The Monkey King nodded understandingly. "I had the whole royal garden watered. Uprooting trees, of course, but for a just cause. I wanted to see the roots. It was a perfect method."

"Perfect," the Apprentice repeated bitterly. "Like my salty wine."

They looked at each other. For a long moment no one spoke. Then, in unison, they sighed.

"A consultant would be needed," the Monkey King proposed.

"A coach," the Apprentice agreed. "Someone to teach us the right method to apply the methods."

Act II: The Training Course

The consultant arrived the next morning. It was a badger, known for its proverbial wisdom and a certain inclination to get paid in dried fruit.

"Then," began the badger, adjusting his glasses on his muzzle, "let's try to understand. The two of you applied a rule literally, without considering the context, and the result was disastrous. Is that correct?"

"Very correct!" exclaimed the two students in chorus.

"Good. Then I will teach you the foolproof method to avoid this mistake. Listen carefully."

The badger took a twig and drew a complicated pattern on the ground, full of arrows and colored circles.

"There," he explained proudly. "It is called METHOD: Hermeneutic Matrix for the Optimal Transposition of Ordinary Decisions. It works like this: before applying any rules, you must fill out this form in triplicate. In the first column, write what you observed. In the second column, write what you think this means. In the third column, ask someone who knows more than you do. Then, and only then, take action. It's foolproof!"

The Monkey King and the Apprentice exchanged beaming glances. Finally a solution!

They returned to work full of enthusiasm. The Monkey King gathered his tribe and explained the new METHOD. "We have to fill out the form! Before watering, let's write!"

The monkeys, obedient, began to fill out form after form. Too bad that to write they had to hold the twig in their hands, and to hold the twig in their hands they had to put down the tools, and to put down the tools they stopped watering. After three days of intensive compilation, the trees were as dry as the parchment they wrote on.

The Apprentice, meanwhile, had instituted a strict verification protocol in the tavern. Before serving any beverage, he would fill out the form with customers. "Do you want salt? Yes? No? In what quantity? For what purpose? Can you describe your relationship with salt?" The customers, exasperated, left after the first drink.

The badger, when he returned for feedback, found his students surrounded by piles of forms and even more disastrous results than before.

"But how?" he asked, sincerely surprised. "I gave you a perfect method!"

Epilogue: The Wisdom of Coffee

That evening, the Monkey King and the Apprentice found themselves in the same dream, more depressed than before.

'I do not understand,' said the Monkey King. "First we applied a rule without a method. Then we applied a method with rules. The result is the same."

"Identical," the Apprentice agreed. "Maybe there's a universal law: the harder we try to do things right, the more we do them badly."

"So what's the solution? Do nothing?"

At that moment, out of nowhere, a steaming cup of coffee appeared. There was no one to serve her, she simply was. On the cup, written in large letters, stood a message:

"Stop. He observes. Breathe. Then you decide. But don't decide too quickly. And if you've made up your mind, ask yourself, 'Am I doing this for the garden or for my need to have a method?'"

The two looked at each other. Then they looked at the cup. Then they looked at each other again.

"Do you think we should follow this advice," asked the Apprentice?

"Well," the Monkey King pondered, "we could apply the METHOD to him. Fill out the form..."

"Or we could," interrupted the Apprentice, "just drink it and be quiet for a minute."

And so they did. They drank coffee in silence, listening to the wind in the trees that, for once, were not uprooted, and the wine that, for once, was not salted.

It was a perfect minute.

Then they woke up, and the next day they started making mistakes again. But every now and then, in the middle of a methodological error, one of them would stop for a moment, remember that cup of coffee, and at least for a second... he hesitated.

And in that hesitation, perhaps, wisdom began.

Moral: There are no infallible methods. There are only fallible beings who, when they remember, pause before ruining everything.

Scene 5 (The Consequence of a Past Karma): The Losaka-Jātaka (41).

Value at stake: Individual responsibility through time.

Post video blogger

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/losaka-jataka-41-il-cortocircuito-della.html

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/losaka-jataka-41-short-circuit-of-mind.html

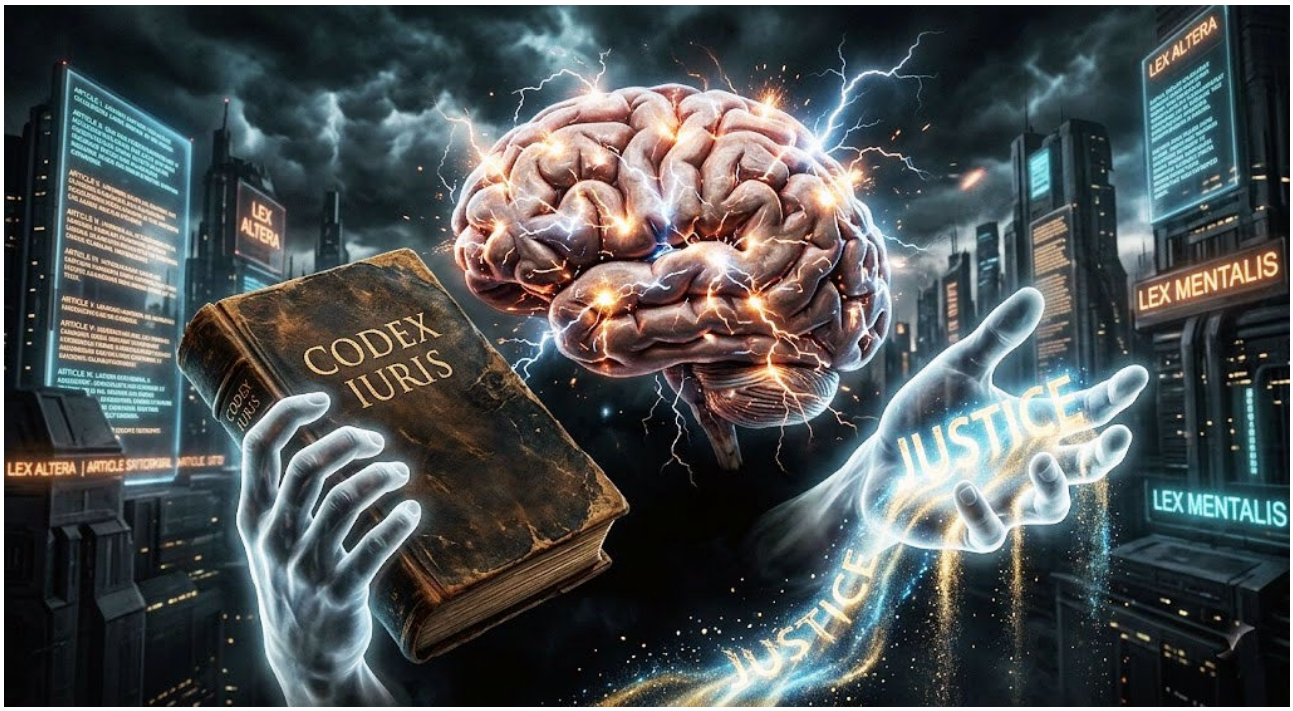
https://youtu.be/WLkyU8BFWt4

Analysis: This Jataka is the bridge. It shows how a past action (a monk's jealous greed) creates an unbroken chain of misfortune. The causality here is no longer immediate (as for the viper), but unravels through existences, creating a "destiny" that the protagonist undergoes without understanding it, groping in the dark and worsening his situation with every move (embracing the goat-ogre). It is the representation of suffering as ignorance of one's own history.

Level 2: The Short Circuit of the Mind

The Incorrect Application of a Rule

Introduction



There is a moment in every person's life when a rule is applied in the wrong way. Not out of malice, often, but because of a sort of mental short-circuit: we see the norm, but not the spirit that animates it. We grasp the letter, but drop the meaning.

We live in an age obsessed with rules. Protocols, procedures, instruction manuals, terms and conditions that we scroll through without reading. Yet, paradoxically, we have never been so good at misunderstanding them. Our time is full of "wrong applications": the bureaucrat who follows the rules but destroys a life, the algorithm that applies his programming but discriminates, the politician who invokes the law but betrays justice.

The following Jātaka tells us about just that: how the mechanical application of a rule - in this case, the jealous protection of what we consider "ours" - can trigger a chain of consequences that winds through time. And it asks us an uncomfortable question: how much are we willing to pay for our mental short circuits?

Chapter 1: The Weight of an Ancient Sin

The story that the Master told Jetavana begins with a man no one wanted around. Losaka Tissa was his name, and he was a monk. But it was something worse: he was a man on whom a curse seemed to rest.

Before he was even born, bad luck had begun to dance around him. In the fishing village where it was conceived, the nets were empty for the first time. Then the fire devoured the houses, seven times. Then the king's wrath came upon the inhabitants, seven times. The villagers, desperate, did what human beings have always done in the face of misfortune: they looked for a scapegoat. They divided into groups, then again into smaller groups, until only one family remained, apparently the bearer of that disaster. And they chased her away with blows.

Loska's mother managed to survive, giving birth to the baby in a remote place. And here the Buddhist text inserts a detail that sounds almost like a divine paradox: he who was born for his last existence cannot be killed. Inside that child there was already, lit like a flame in a jar, his final destination: to become an Arahat, an enlightened one. But between that abandoned newborn and that goal stretched the shadow of an action carried out millennia earlier.

Chapter 2: The Raven and the Beggar

The child grew up as an outcast could grow up in ancient India: with a shard in his hand to collect alms, sleeping wherever he could, eating like a crow the rice residues thrown out of the doors. He was seven years old when Sāriputta, the Buddha's chief disciple, noticed him during the alms round.

There is something moving in the scene: the great Sāriputta, "the Captain of the Faith", who bends over to that child covered in dirt and asks him: "Where are you from? Where are your parents?" And the child who responds with the simplicity of someone who has already learned the harshness of the world: "I am a derelict. My parents, tired of me, abandoned me."

"Do you want to become a monk?"

"I would like to, sir. But who would welcome a poor wretch like me?"

"Me."

Sāriputta washed him with his own hands, fed him, ordained him a novice and then a monk. Yet, despite the protection of the most powerful of the Buddha's disciples, Losaka Tissa remained what he had always been: one who could do nothing. No alms satiated him. No matter how generous the offering, his bowl always seemed full with a single spoonful of rice, and the donors moved on. The food, put in its bowl, simply... disappeared.

He became Arahat, enlightened. And he continued to go hungry.

Chapter 3: The Last Meal

On the day that Losaka Tissa was to die, Sāriputta decided that, at least for once, his disciple would eat his fill. He took him with him for alms to Sāvatti, the great city. But nothing. No one offered them food. Then Sāriputta sent Losaka to the monastery and collected food by himself, sending him with messengers. The messengers... forgot. They ate it.

When Sāriputta returned and asked, "Have you received food, brother?", Losaka replied with the resignation of one who has learned to wait: "I will receive it in due time, without a doubt."

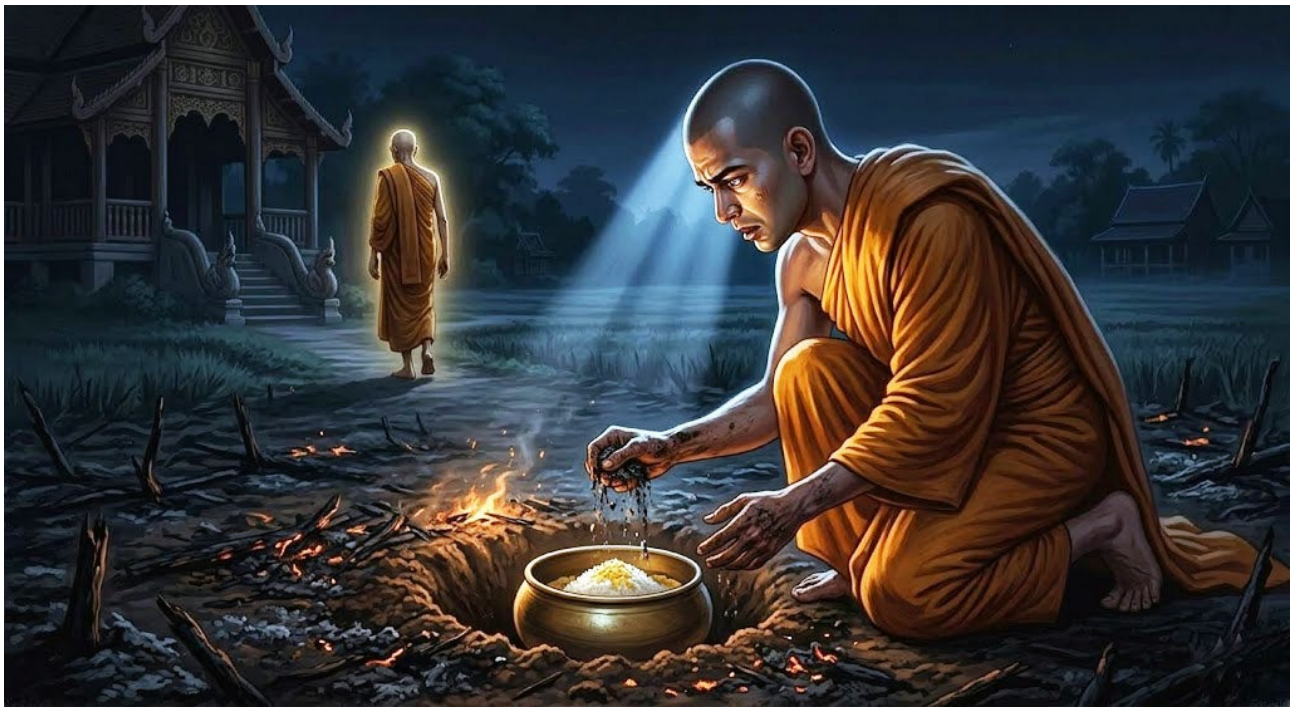
Noon had passed. For the monks, it was too late to eat. But Sāriputta did not give up. He went to the king's palace, got the four kinds of sweets, went back to Losaka and said to him, "Sit down and eat. I will keep the bowl. If I left it, everything would disappear."

And so it happened. The great Sāriputta, with his hands, held the bowl while Losaka Tissa finally ate his fill. That same day, the humble monk who had been a human raven entered the final Nibbāna.

The monks, in the Hall of Truth, wondered: how could such an unfortunate man achieve such glory? And the Buddha replied, "Brothers, your own actions were the cause of both your misery and your enlightenment."

And he told the story of a distant time.

Chapter 4: The Monastery and the Buried Fire



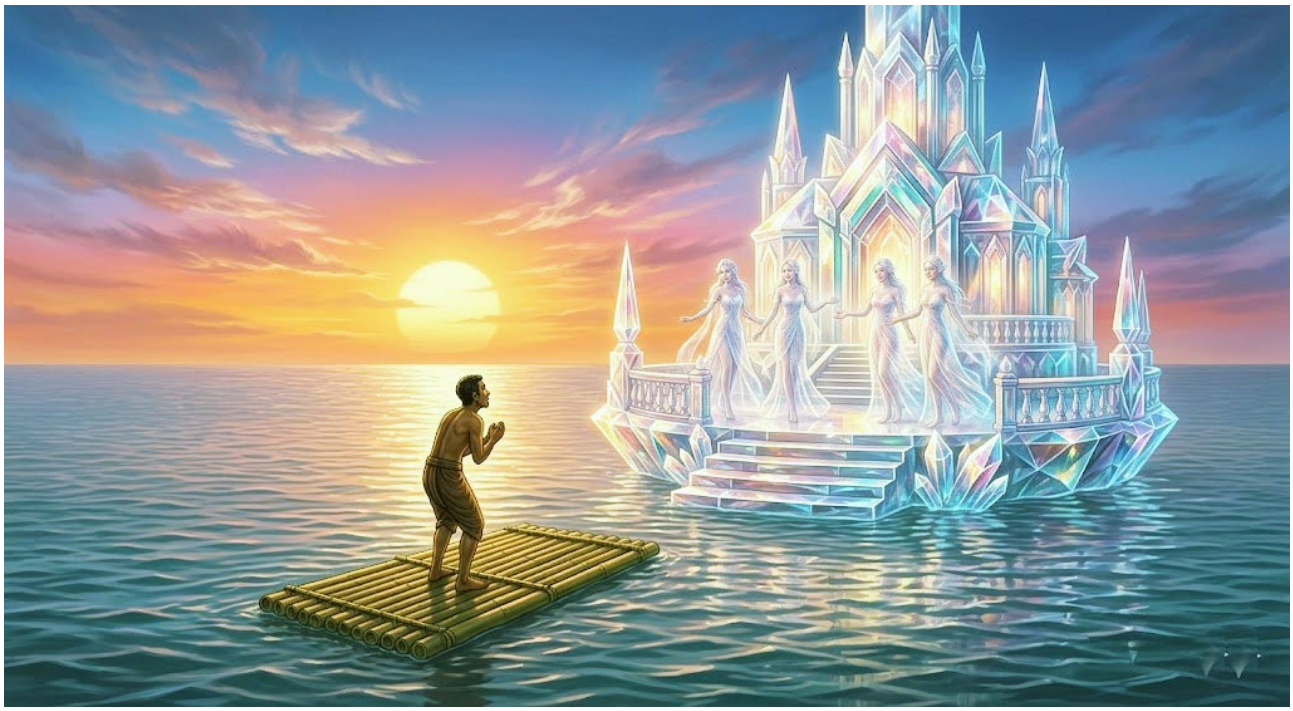
Many lifetimes before, in the time of the Buddha Kassapa, there was a monk who lived in a village, maintained by a wealthy landowner. He was a man of regular conduct, virtuous, full of wisdom. But when one day an old monk, an Arahat, arrived in the village, the landowner was so impressed that he invited him to stay and offered him a meal.

The resident monk saw everything and felt the ground move under his feet. "I am losing my benefactor," he thought. "If this old monk stays, I will count for nothing more."

So, when the benefactor sent food for the guest the next day, the resident monk took it and, instead of delivering it, buried it in a freshly burned field, covering it with embers. Then he returned to his cell, convinced that he had solved the problem. But the Arahat, reading his mind, had already departed.

Too late the monk realized what he had done. 'Woe to me,' he cried, 'my greed has made me sin.' And from that day on, he became like a living ghost, tormented by remorse.

Chapter 5: The Rebirths of Mittaka



The law of karma is not a divine punishment, but a simple equation: sown wind, harvest storm. And that monk, for hundreds of thousands of years, reaped the storm.

He was reborn for five hundred lives as a demon, always hungry, satiating himself only one day with carrion. For another five hundred lives as a dog, satiated only once with vomited rice. Then in a family of beggars, with a name that became proverbial: Mitta-vindaka. And the hunger continued.

His story became an odyssey of misfortune. Kicked out by his parents, he ended up studying with a famous teacher (the Bodhisatta in a previous life), but he was intractable, quarrelsome. He fled, married, had children, and brought ruin to all the villages that hosted him. The king punished them, fire destroyed them, the water tanks dried up. Always his fault.

Hunted again, he lost his wife and children devoured by demons in a forest. He embarked on a ship, but it brought bad luck there too: the ship stopped in the middle of the ocean, and seven times fate pointed to him as the culprit. They threw him into the sea on a bamboo raft.

And here, by a paradox of fate, his old merit (having observed the commandments at the time of the Buddha Kassapa) allowed him to meet deities who lived in palaces of crystal, silver, jewels and gold. Four, then eight, then sixteen, then thirty-two celestial nymphs. He lived with them for seven days each time. But he was never happy. He wanted more. Ignoring their warnings, he continued to travel.

Until he encountered an island inhabited by a demon disguised as a goat. Thinking he was eating it, he grabbed it by the leg. The demon hurled him across the ocean and he fell into a ditch outside Benares.

Chapter 6: The Goat and the Lesson

Getting up, Mitta-vindaka saw goats. His reasoning was simple and crazy: "A goat on an island in the ocean threw me here when I grabbed it by the leg. Perhaps, if I do the same with these goats, I shall be hurled back to the nymphs.'

He grabbed a goat by the leg. The goat bleated. The goatherds rushed and beat him, tying him up to take him to the king as a cattle thief.

It was then that his old teacher, the Bodhisatta, passed by. He recognized him, saved him from the goatherds, and asked him where he had been all this time. Mitta-vindaka told his story: the nymphs, the palaces, the island, the goat.

The master shook his head and recited:

"The stubborn man who, when exhorted,

he pays no attention to friends who give wise advice,

will certainly end up hurting himself, like Mittaka,

when he grabbed the grazing goat by the leg."

Mitta-vindaka had not been bad. He had been stubborn. He had applied a wrong rule to the wrong situation. He had seen a goat and thought of another goat. He had seen a mechanical solution and applied it without understanding the context. His mental short-circuit had condemned him to repeat the same mistake over and over again, chasing a pleasure he believed he deserved but could never hold back.

Conclusion: The Ray of Light - The Wisdom That Breaks the Chain

"This Losaka," the Buddha concluded, "was himself the cause both of his receiving little and of his attainment of Arahatship."

In this sentence there is the whole paradox of the human condition. We are prisoners of our past actions, but also architects of our future. The chain of karma is not an ineluctable destiny, but a series of links that we ourselves have forged. And if we have forged them, we can also break them.

Losaka/Mitta-vindaka's mental short-circuit was twofold: in one lifetime, he had applied the wrong rule ("protect what is mine") to the wrong context (an Arahat who wanted nothing from him). In another life, he had applied the wrong rule ("grabbing the goat will bring me back") to the wrong context (a normal goat in a ditch). He had been trapped in the letter of experience, without grasping its spirit.

But in his last life, something changed. He accepted his condition. He did not protest when the food disappeared. He was not angry when the messengers forgot. He simply said, "I will receive it in due time." And in that acceptance, in that resignation that was not resignation but wisdom, the possibility of grace opened up. Sāriputta was able to help him precisely because Losaka demanded nothing, he did not cling to anything.

The wisdom that breaks the chain is precisely this: to see things as they are, not as we would like them to be. It is the ray of light that illuminates the short-circuit mechanism and allows it to be interrupted.

In our contemporary culture, we are surrounded by Losaka. We see them in social commentators who apply the same controversy to different contexts, expecting different results. We see them in politicians who repeat the same magic formulas in the face of new crises. We see them in ourselves, when we face a new problem with old solutions, when we grab the wrong goat hoping it will take us back to the lost nymphs.

But we also see the rays of light. These are those moments when someone stops and says, "Maybe I made the wrong rule." They are the people who learn from mistakes, who break the cycle of automatic reactions, who accept that they don't know and ask for help. Like Losaka who accepted Sāriputta's hand.

And so, with the death of Losaka Tissa and her final enlightenment, the second level closes. But the chain is not broken for everyone. Even today, in countless lifetimes, beings like Mitta-vindaka continue to grab goats hoping to get back. Even today, the short circuit of the mind produces suffering.

But there is a third level. A ray of light.

In the next chapter, we will explore the wisdom that breaks the chain. Not the one that limits itself to seeing error, but the one that transforms vision into liberation. Not just an awareness of karma, but a deep understanding that beyond karma there is something greater: freedom.

Welcome to Level 3: The Ray of Light - The Wisdom That Breaks the Chain.

Ironic tale

A small ironic story that brings the message of Losaka-Jātaka into our present.

The Short Circuit of the Middle Manager

That is, how to apply the wrong rule to the wrong context and get exactly what you deserve

Marco was an exemplary office manager. He knew the company regulations by heart, he had underlined them with five different colors and he quoted them in meetings as others quote Dante. He was so loyal that when the new attendance management software began to report "anomalies", Marco felt compelled to apply the procedure: three days of suspension for those who clocked in after hours, even if only by one minute.

The first victim was Mrs. Carla, who for twenty years had arrived at 8:32 instead of 8:30 because she had to accompany her elderly mother to the day center. Marco read the rules to her with the voice of someone who believes he is doing justice.

Mrs. Carla did not protest. He took the suspension, then took early retirement. And from that day, inexplicably, everything began to go wrong in Marco's ward. The printers jammed only when he had to print. The coffee from the machine always came out bitter. The meetings were prolonged until they ended at times that made him miss the 6:42 p.m. train.

Marco did not connect the facts. He was a rational man.

Then came the young trainee Giulia, who used to leave her desk ten minutes earlier to catch the bus. Marco summoned her, showed her the circular, and applied the procedure. Giulia apologized, smiled, and the next day she brought a cake to the office for everyone. Except for Marco.

The cake was dark chocolate. Marco loved dark chocolate. That day, for the first time in his career, Marco felt something similar to a small, insignificant, but undeniable short circuit inside him.

"That's not fair," he thought. But he didn't know exactly what wasn't right.

In the following days, Marco decided to apply another procedure: the one for reporting "uncooperative behavior". He wrote three pages about Giulia. The next day, his car did not start. The next time again, he found on his dashboard a parking ticket in a place where he had parked for ten years without problems.

Marco did not connect.

At the quarterly meeting, the executive announced that Marco's office was the only one that had not met its targets. "I propose a training course on the corporate climate," said the executive. "You will participate too, Marco."

Marco attended the course. The first lesson talked about "flexibility", "active listening" and "intelligent application of rules". Marco took notes with his usual method: he underlined everything in green, which according to his color code meant "important but not a priority".

Back in the office, he found a reminder on his desk: "Please note that the procedure for clocking in is suspended for technical reasons". He looked at the paper. Then he looked at the cup of coffee that the cleaning lady, now in confidence, had left him with a smile.

The cup was full. The coffee was hot. And Marco, for the first time, no longer understood which rule to apply.

He took his coffee. He drank it. He didn't emphasize anything.

That night he dreamed of a goat staring at him with yellow eyes. In the dream, the goat said to him, "If you grab me by the leg, you will come back." Marco woke up with a start, sweating, and thought: "What kind of dream is that?"

The next day, he saw a goat in the meadow in front of the offices. It was the goat of the green service, the one that kept the grass low. Marco looked at her for a long time. Then he shook his head and went back inside.

He didn't grab the goat.

And perhaps, for a man accustomed to grasping everything that resembled a rule, that was the first true wisdom.

The ward slowly began to function again. The printers stopped jamming. Coffee became drinkable again. Marco did not become a saint, he did not leave everything to follow a spiritual master, he did not win the prize for management innovation. But every time he was about to apply a rule mechanically, he would think of the goat.

And he stopped.

End

Ironic note: If in some office, right now, someone is pointing out a regulation with five different colors, it is probably because he has not yet met his goat. But karma, as we know, has its gentle way of reminding us of this.

Level 3: The Ray of Light - The Wisdom That Breaks the Chain

LIVELLO 3: IL RAGGIO DI LUCE - LA SAGGEZZA CHE SPEZZA LA CATENA
Attraverso la Retta Visione, la catena della causalità negativa si spezza, rivelando la verità e restaurando l'armonia.

In this final level, figures emerge who, thanks to the correct vision (respect for experience, unshakable faith, knowledge of the context), break the cycle of negative causality and generate a positive outcome or reveal the truth.

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https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/tittira-jataka-37-la-pernice-la-scimmia.html

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/tittira-jataka-37-partridge-monkey-and.html

https://youtu.be/-O0zRGOA-F0

Scene 6 (The Value of Experience and Order): The Tittira-Jātaka (37).

Value at stake: Wisdom as the fruit of time and respect.

In a world of violent stories, this is an oasis of harmony. The partridge, the monkey and the elephant do not compete, but establish an order based on seniority understood as experience. Mutual respect generates peace. It is the antidote to the presumption of the raven (42) or the stupidity of the apes (46).

The Breath of the Banyan

Introduction: The oldest fruit

We live in an age where novelty is mistaken for truth, speed for intelligence, and arrogance for leadership. In the corridors of companies as well as in digital squares, the debate is often won by those who raise their voices the loudest, not by those who have the longest memory. We are surrounded by violent stories, deaf generational conflicts and a presumption that, like a noisy crow, believes it can obscure the sun with the beating of its wings.

Yet, there is a silent wisdom, rooted like the roots of a centuries-old tree, which does not need to shout to impose respect. It is the wisdom that comes from time, from having seen the seasons pass and from having learned that every crisis is just a leaf that falls to make room for the new one. This is the story of three friends who, in a very distant era, discovered that the only way to break the chain of discord was not to compete, but to bow. A lesson that, today more than ever, is just waiting to be rediscovered.

Chapter 1: The Three Friends Without Order

On the gentle slopes of the Himalayas, where the air smells of moss and dew, stood a gigantic Banyan tree. Its aerial roots descended to the earth like columns of a living temple, and its foliage was so thick that it looked like a night sky of leaves.

Under that green vault lived three companions: an elephant with skin as wrinkled as bark, an agile and witty monkey, and a partridge with modest plumage, which spent its days scratching the earth in search of seeds.

For a long time, their friendship had been simple. But as the days passed, an uneasiness began to creep between them. There was no longer respect or subordination. Everyone acted on their own. The elephant, with its size, lay down where it preferred, crushing the paths of the monkey. The monkey, with irreverence, threw unripe fruit on the elephant's head to wake him up. The partridge, tired of the chaos, retreated more and more to the sidelines, forgotten.

It was a silent chaos, made up of small abuses and a lack of order that made their coexistence empty. No one was driving, no one was listening.

Chapter 2: The Covenant Under the Canopy

One evening, as the sun dyed the snow-capped peaks with copper, the three found themselves reunited at the base of the Banyan. The elephant looked into the void with thoughtful eyes, the monkey stopped swinging, and the partridge stopped its search for food.

"Friends," the monkey broke the silence, with an unusual seriousness for her, "it is not possible to continue like this. We live without respect, as if we were strangers."

"That's true," the elephant bellowed in a deep voice. "Each of us pulls for himself. There is a lack of order, there is a lack of someone to look up to."

The partridge, which had been silent up to that moment, stepped forward with a firm step. "Then let's establish order," he said in a calm but firm voice. "Not by force, but by truth. Let's find out which of us is the oldest, the one who has seen the most seasons, and honor him as a guide. Only in this way can we find peace."

The elephant and the monkey looked at each other. The idea was as simple as it was revolutionary. For the first time, they decided not to compete, but to listen to the memory of the land.

Chapter 3: The Measurement of Time

"I'll start," thundered the elephant, snorting proudly. "When I was just a puppy, as tall as a bush, this banyan was a simple shrub. I stepped over it and its highest branches barely touched my belly. I saw this tree being born."

The monkey nodded, thinking. Then he spoke: "My memory reaches further. When I was young, I jumped from these branches without fear. Sitting here on the ground, I barely stretched my neck and could already eat the cutest shoots of the top. This tree, when I met it, was already a tree, but it was still so small that a jump was enough to reach it."

The elephant looked at the monkey with respect, acknowledging its antiquity. Then they both turned to the partridge, which stood there motionless, with its head slightly tilted.

"And you, friend?" asked the monkey, in a humbler tone. "What's your story?"

The partridge raised its eyes to the immense hair that stretched above them, then lowered them to the ground. In a quiet tone, like one who tells an ancient story, he said, "You see, a long time ago, there was an even older banyan tree over the hill. I ate one of its fruits, its most ripe seeds. And as I flew, I laid them right here on this earth."

He paused, gently scratching the ground with one paw.

"From those seeds this tree was born. I did not see him born: I gave birth to him. So, my friends, I have known this banyan since before it was a sprout. I am the memory of this house."

Absolute silence fell under the foliage. The elephant lowered his head, the monkey came down from the branch and sat down on the ground.

Chapter 4: The New Order

The elephant, with its size, was the first to bow. "You are the oldest, partridge friend," she said in a voice broken with emotion. "Your wisdom is older than my strength and the agility of the monkey. From now on, all honors and respect will be due to you."

The monkey nodded, and together they promised, "We will follow your advice. We will bow before your experience."

It was a moment of grace. The partridge did not rejoice, he did not impose strict laws. Instead, he began to teach them their first teachings: he exhorted them to observe the five precepts of upright conduct, not to hurt themselves, to respect the weakest and to live in harmony.

From that day on, the elephant no longer walked the paths without looking, the monkey stopped being irreverent, and when the partridge spoke, they both stopped to listen. Order was not imposed by fear, but born of mutual recognition. And in that newfound harmony, the three friends discovered a peace that no competition could ever give.

When the time came for their farewell from that life, their virtue had become so luminous that heaven itself welcomed them.

Conclusion: The Shadow of the Banyan in the City of Glass

The story of the partridge, the monkey and the elephant is not just an ancient parable. It is a mirror pointed at our frenetic contemporaneity. Today, in the age of disintermediation and digital arrogance, we are often like those three animals before the pact: confused, devoid of hierarchies of meaning, convinced that novelty (the youngest twig) is more important than the root.

We live in a world where old age is often misunderstood as obsolescence. The modern "crow", represented by the presumption of those who believe they know everything without having experienced anything, croaks on social media. The "stupidity of the apes" is the mass that follows without asking why. Yet, Tittira-Jātaka offers us a very powerful antidote: respect for experience.

In a company, in a family, in a community, order does not come from a title or an armchair, but from memory. Those who planted the seed, those who saw the tree grow and withstood the storms, possess a wisdom that no algorithm can replicate.

The Buddha, in telling this story, taught that the true hierarchy is not that of power, but that of time. And those who honor age, in its highest meaning of lived experience and preserved memory, reap fruits that go beyond simple daily peace: they sow the conditions for a wiser future.

In an age that burns its very roots, perhaps the time has come to stop in the shadow of the banyan tree and learn to listen again. Because as the partridge teaches, strength is not in imposition, but in the ability to remember where we come from to understand where we are going.

The partridge, the intern and the consultant

Once upon a time, in a very modern open space with very high ceilings and ergonomic chairs, there was an elephant, a monkey and a partridge. The elephant was the senior vice president, with a desk the size of a whale and a LinkedIn account full of "compliments on the post." The monkey was the head of innovation, always with a MacBook under his arm and a newly done agile coaching course. The partridge, on the other hand, was the oldest of the team: she had seen the project born when it was still called "initiative" and was prototyped with cardboard and post-its.

One day, after yet another reorganization, the three found themselves arguing about who should have the best workstation – the one with the window, the 4K monitor and the coffee machine three steps away.

"I," the elephant barked, "I signed the original budget. Without me, this project would still be a drawing on a napkin."

"But I," shrieked the monkey, hopping from chair to chair, "introduced the disruptive methodology that made everything climb! Without me you would still be holding meetings with the projector!"

The partridge, who was silently arranging a file on letterhead from 1998, coughed: "Sorry, I remember when this project was just a seed. I planted it, literally. I wrote the first business case by hand, on a notepad that someone then used to take notes at the bar."

The elephant and the monkey looked at each other. Then, in unison, they said, "Yes, but you don't know how to use Slack."

And so the partridge was relegated to a windowless room, next to the printer that always jams. The project, devoid of its historical memory, went ahead with brilliant slides and roadmaps in continuous rewriting. After six months, no one remembered why the project had come about, but everyone was convinced they had invented it.

Moral: in a world that confines the experience to a cloud to which no one has the password, even a partridge can become an extinct bird.

Scene 7 (Faith Transforming Reality): The Khadiraṅgāra-Jātaka (40).

Value at stake: The virtuous determination (adhiṭṭhāna) that transcends the obstacle.

This is the peak of the essay. Faced with the illusion of Māra (fire), the treasurer does not stop at sensory perception. His inner "vision" (faith in the gift) is stronger than appearance. His courageous step creates a new reality (the lotus). It is the power of positive kamma: virtuous action, performed with right intention, has the power to transform the obstacles themselves into vehicles of salvation.

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https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/khadirangara-jataka-40-il-dono-che.html

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/khadirangara-jataka-40-gift-that-turns.html

https://youtu.be/duSGA2ctOs8

The Gift That Turns Hell into Lotus

Khadiraṅgāra-Jātaka (40)

Introduction: Faith as a Creative Act

We live in an age that has made "proof" the foundation of knowledge. We want to see to believe, touch to be certain. Fire burns, this is a law that we consider immovable, engraved in the very structure of reality. Yet, there is a dimension of human experience in which the law of cause and effect is not as rigid as it seems: it is the dimension of virtuous action performed with unshakable faith. The Khadiraṅgāra-Jātaka presents us with exactly this paradox: a man who, faced with a pit of hot coals, does not retreat because his inner vision is more powerful than the sensible appearance. His steps do not lead him to death, but make a lotus bloom from the depths of fire.

This is the story of how virtuous determination (adhiṭṭhāna) can literally transform reality. It is not magic, but a profound principle: when the intention is pure and the faith is firm, the same obstacles are converted into vehicles of salvation. In an age like ours, dominated by utilitarian calculation and the fear of failure, this ancient story challenges us with an uncomfortable question: are we still capable of such a courageous step, or has our "reasonableness" made us prisoners of a world of appearances that we no longer dare to transfigure?

Chapter 1: The Treasurer Who Can't Count

Poverty as a Proof of Fidelity

Once upon a time, in Savatthi, there was a man whose name had become synonymous with generosity: Anātha-piṇḍika, "He who feeds the poor". His wealth was legendary — fifty-four crores spent on the Jetavana monastery alone, not counting the daily hospitality offered to five hundred monks led by the Buddha himself. His house had seven floors and seven doors, and through those doors passed every day a river of gifts: rice in the morning, butter and honey after breakfast, perfumes and textiles in the evening.

But generosity, if unlimited, has a cost. Anātha-piṇḍika no longer did business. Eighteen crores were on loan to merchants whom he did not solicit to return. Eighteen crores had sunk into the Aciravatī River, swept away by a flood. Another eighteen crores, again, were simply... disappeared, swallowed up by the land or the sea.

Yet, every day, his door remained open for the monks.

One morning, sitting in front of the Buddha, he confessed serenely: "Master, in my house offerings are still given, but now there is only a little acid mush left over from the day before." The Buddha looked at him with eyes that saw beyond appearances and replied, "Don't grieve, householder. If the heart is good, the food offered to the Buddhas and their disciples can only be good too. Why? For the size of the fruit that derives from it".

These words were not a mere comfort. They were the revelation of a law: the quality of the offer is not measured in the material, but in the intention. In a world obsessed with exchange value, this is a revolution. Anātha-piṇḍika had already understood that the gift does not impoverish the giver, but transforms him.

Chapter 2: The Invisible Temptress

The voice of prudence

But there was someone, in his own house, who thought differently. Above the fourth gate dwelt a spirit, a yakkhinī, who for years had silently endured the daily invasion of monks and disciples. Every time the Buddha crossed the threshold, she had to descend from her high floors to the ground, dragging her children with her. Every time an elderly person entered or left, the same. His house had become a public passage.

"I can't live like this anymore," he thought. "As long as the ascetic Gotama and his disciples continue to come here, I will not have peace."

He waited for the right moment. When Anātha-piṇḍika's wealth began to run low, it manifested itself first to its steward, then to its eldest son, with the same advice: "The master is squandering everything. He no longer does business, he doesn't think about the future. Convince him to drive out that ascetic and his monks." But both the steward and her son dismissed her with disdain: "Even if the master wants to sell me as a slave, I will never say a word against the Faith."

At last, when Anātha-piṇḍika was reduced to poverty, the spirit dared to present itself to him directly. In the middle of the night, he appeared in visible form, suspended in the air.

'Who are you?' asked the merchant.

"I am the yakkhinī who dwells above your fourth gate, O great merchant. I have come to give you some advice."

"Speak."

"You have spent immense wealth on the ascetic Gotama, and now you are reduced to misery. And yet you continue to welcome it! What you have given is now lost. But from now on, do not go to him again, and do not let his disciples set foot in this house. Think about your business, recover the family fortune."

Anātha-piṇḍika listened to her in silence. Then he answered: "Was this the advice you wanted to give me?"

"Yes."

The merchant stood up, and his voice did not tremble: "The Lord of Wisdom has made me invulnerable to a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand spirits like you! My faith is as firm as Mount Sineru. My riches have been spent on the Faith that leads to Salvation. Your words are evil, a blow to the Faith of the Buddhas. I can't live under the same roof with you. Get out of my house at once!"

The yakkhinī, defeated, took her children by the hand and went out.

Chapter 3: The Pilgrimage of Confession

Where to find refuge?

Driven from her home, the yakkhinī began to wander. He went to the guardian of the city: "Sir, I spoke imprudently to Anātha-piṇḍika, and he drove me away. Intercede for me." But the guardian, knowing what she had said, rejected her: "Your words have been wicked. I can't go with you."

He went to the Four Great Kings, guardians of the four cardinal points, but received the same refusal. At last, in despair, she ascended to the heaven of Tāvatiṃsa, where Sakka, king of the gods, reigns. She told him her story, and added: "Deva, now wander homeless, leading my children by the hand. Give me a place to live."

Sakka looked at her sternly but also compassionately. "You acted badly. Dealt a blow to the Conqueror's Faith. I can't talk to the merchant on your behalf. But I can show you a way to reconcile yourself to him."

"What way, must he?"

"Repair the damage you tried to do. He recovers the eighteen crores that merchants owe to Anātha-piṇḍika. He fishes out the eighteen crores from the sea. He digs the buried eighteen crores out of the earth. Fill his empty coffers with these fifty-four crores. Then, and only then, ask him for forgiveness."

The yakkhinī obeyed. With his supernatural powers, he transformed himself into the merchant's agent, presented himself to the debtors, terrorized them, and recovered every coin. He recovered the sealed crates from the sea. He found the buried treasure. In one night, Anātha-piṇḍika's coffers were full again.

Then, again in visible form, he presented himself to the merchant: "Great merchant, forgive me. On behalf of Sakka, I have recovered all your assets. The fifty-four crores are back. Now I am homeless, and I suffer. Forgive me".

Anātha-piṇḍika, with the wisdom of one who is now firm in the Faith, did not immediately grant her forgiveness. "If you want my forgiveness, come with me into the presence of the Master."

Chapter 4: The Law of Maturation

"ยาวปาปัสสะ กัมมัสสะ นาวุยหะติ,
ma rnnoṭa to haipā aṛ̃u dawnāma." – Dhammapada 119
ภาย อากิญจัญญัง kur araṛvngares malifa spaida,
mṛ emiboloati aṅnu vitrprega ivr mudust para mjasa."
– Dhammapada 120

The rooms of the Dhammapada

At dawn, the merchant led the yakkhinī to the Buddha. He told everything that had happened. Master listened, then spoke two stanzas that still resonate today in the heart of the Buddhist canon:

The sinner considers his evil action to be good

until evil has ripened its fruit.

But when evil ripens,

then the sinner sees that he has been bad.

The good man considers his virtuous action badly

until the good has ripened its fruit.

But when good matures,

then the good man sees that he has been well.

These words are not a mere moral teaching. They describe a structure of consciousness: the inability to evaluate an action before it has produced its consequences. The yakkhinī had judged Anātha-piṇḍika's generosity as "madness" because she saw only immediate impoverishment. He could not see the fruit. But now, after repairing the damage and listening to Master, something changed in her.

The rooms of the Dhammapada did what no reasoning could have done: they opened his eyes to the truth. The yakkhinī, who had lived for centuries in the dimension of desire and attachment, was established in the Fruit of the First Path. She fell at the feet of the Buddha, weeping: "I was stained by passion, depraved by sin, blinded by ignorance. I spoke badly because I did not know your virtues. Forgive me!"

And he received forgiveness.

Chapter 5: The Pit of Burning Coals

The true prodigy

At this point, Anātha-piṇḍika, with the joy of one who has seen his faith triumph, said to the Buddha: "Master, this yakkhinī has tried in every way to prevent me from supporting the Buddha and the Sangha, but she has not succeeded. Wasn't this a great test of my faith?"

The Buddha smiled. "Head of the family, you are a converted disciple, your faith is firm and your vision is purified. No wonder you weren't stopped by this helpless yakkhinī. The real wonder is another."

And he told an ancient story, when a Buddha had not yet appeared in the world and knowledge had not yet ripened its full fruit.

Once upon a time, in Benares, there was a treasurer who was the Bodhisatta, the one who would become the Buddha. Like Anātha-piṇḍika, he was generous: he had built six alms halls, one at each of the four gates of the city, one in the center, and one at the gate of his own abode. He observed the precepts, he respected the days of fasting.

One day, while breakfast was being served, a Pacekka Buddha — a solitary enlightened man — emerged from seven days of meditative ecstasy and thought of going to the treasurer for almsgiving. The Bodhisatta saw him coming from the door and immediately got up to serve him.

At that moment, Māra, the Lord of Illusion, the tempter par excellence, became agitated: "It has been seven days since that Pacekka Buddha has received food. If he doesn't eat today, he will die. I will destroy him and stop the treasurer from giving."

Māra created, in the middle of the house, a pit eighty cubits deep, full of burning acacia coals, which burned and flamed like the Avīci hell itself. Then he suspended himself in the air.

When the servant went to fetch the alms bowl, he saw the grave and recoiled in terror. He did the same a second, a third, until everyone fled.

The Bodhisatta understood, "Māra created this obstacle to stop me from almsgiving. But I will not be shaken even by a hundred, by a thousand Māra. Today we will see whose strength it is".

He took the bowl with his own hands, left the house and stood on the edge of the burning pit. Looking up to the sky, he saw Māra.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am Māra."

"Is it you who created this pit of hot coals?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"To stop you from begging and destroy the life of this Pacekka Buddha."

The Bodhisatta then spoke a stanza that became the heart of this story:

I'd rather throw myself headlong

in this infernal abyss, than to bow to shame.

Deign, sir, to accept this alms from my hands.

And, clutching the bowl with food, he took a step forward.

Chapter 6: The Lotus That Blossoms from Fire

Determination that creates reality

His foot rested on the void above the pit of fire.

And at that instant, through all the eighty cubits of depth, a gigantic lotus without peer rose from the bottom, opening to receive his steps. A cloud of pollen rose from the flower and fell on the head of the Great Being, sprinkling it entirely with gold dust.

Standing in the heart of the lotus, the Bodhisatta poured the food into the bowl of the Pacekka Buddha.

Māra, defeated and humiliated, vanished.

The Pacekka Buddha, after eating and expressing his gratitude, threw the bowl into the sky and rose into the air, disappearing towards the Himalayas.

And the Bodhisatta, still standing in the lotus, preached the truth to the people, extolling almsgiving and observance of the precepts. Then, surrounded by the crowd, he returned to his home.

Conclusion: Reality as a Field of Transformation

What does this history, so distant in time and space, teach us who live in the age of science and technology?

The Khadiraṅgāra-Jātaka is not a miracle story in the superficial sense of the word. It is a profound exploration of how human consciousness can interact with reality. The fire of Māra is real — the Bodhisatta does not ignore it, he does not deny it. But his virtuous determination (adhiṭṭhāna) creates the conditions for a transformation: the fire is not denied, but is transcended.

In Buddhist psychology, this is the power of positive kamma. It is not a mechanical law of cause and effect, but a dynamic in which pure intention has the ability to transform the obstacles themselves into vehicles of salvation. The Bodhisatta does not "overcome" Māra by force, but by faith. And faith here is not irrational belief, but a mode of vision that goes beyond sensory perception.

In our time, we are accustomed to thinking of reality as something already given, immutable. The laws of physics, economic conditioning, social structures appear to us as a pit of hot coals — something whose existence we can only suffer. The Jātaka suggests another possibility: that reality is also a field in which consciousness, if sufficiently pure and determined, can make lotuses flourish.

Anātha-piṇḍika, the merchant who "did not know how to count", understood something that our culture of calculation has forgotten: that the gift does not impoverish, but transforms. The yakkhinī, which saw only immediate loss, represents the worldly prudence that keeps us from taking the decisive step. And Māra, finally, is the fear that the fire will burn us if we dare to cross the boundaries of the "reasonable".

The Buddha, in telling this story to Anātha-piṇḍika, does not tell him that his generosity will be rewarded with material wealth — although, in history, it was. He tells him something deeper: that his faith, already strong, is of the same nature as that which once made a lotus bloom from fire. The real reward is not the money recovered, but the transformation itself: the yakkhinī that converts, the fire that becomes a flower.

In a world that teaches us to calculate every risk, not to take steps without guarantees, this ancient story asks us: are we still capable of a step that we cannot demonstrate rationally? Can we still believe that virtuous action, done with right intention, has the power to transform the obstacles themselves?

Perhaps the real miracle is not the lotus that blooms from the fire. It is the determination of the one who, seeing the fire, does not stop.

"I'd rather throw myself headlong

in this infernal abyss, than to bow to shame."

Thus spoke the treasurer. And the fire, which was to destroy him, became his throne of flowers.

The Gift That Crashed the Algorithm

Even today Anātha-piṇḍika would have ended up like an entrepreneur declared bankrupt by social media. Does he stop billing to feed monks? Zero ROI to buy ghee deals? Algorithms would have branded him as a "container at risk", his former associates would have written indignant posts on LinkedIn, and someone would even have started a collection to save him from himself.

In modern-day Savatthi, the yakkhinī no longer lives above the fourth gate: she has become a business consultant. It comes with well-made slides, pie charts, and a smile that promises optimization. "Dear entrepreneur, your generosity is eroding the core business. We need to redirect resources towards shareholder value. And then, sorry, that guy in the orange cassock who comes in every day – does he have personal branding? A turnover plan?"

Anātha-piṇḍika, however, even in a start-up version, is hard-headed. "You talk about return on investment, but I know a return that your KPIs don't measure." And he continues to donate, until all he has left is a bowl of sour rice and a bank account in the red.

At this point the yakkhinī consultant gives him up for dead and moves on to the next case. But the unexpected happens: the debtors (those with the eighteen crore of securitized bonds) are seized by an inexplicable attack of conscience, or perhaps by a chamber of commerce certificate with special effects; Sunken chests resurface on their own, like treasure emojis in a viral reel; And a non-repayable fund forgotten in some tax haven materializes with a stamp and receipt.

The yakkhinī is disappointed. "But it's impossible, the numbers don't lie!" She runs to Sakka, who has since become a spiritual influencer with ten million followers. Sakka scrolls through the feed and says, "Honey, you didn't understand anything. He played with another metric: that of virtuous determination. You can also create ditches of hot coals, but if one walks on them with the right faith, that fire becomes pure engagement."

Moral: in a world that tells you not to throw pearls to pigs, perhaps the real risk is never to throw them. And then, who knows, maybe the pigs turn into lotuses. Or at least in a viral post shared by the Buddha.

Scene 8 (Self-Destructive Greed): The Vedabbha-Jātaka (48) and the Nanda-Jātaka (39).

Value at stake: Knowledge as a tool and greed as self-deception.

Post video blogger

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/vedabbha-jataka-48-la-cupidigia-che-si.html

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/vedabbha-jataka-48-greed-that-destroys.html

https://youtu.be/X3AZ1Lbp7IY

The Vedabbha is the perfect counterpart to the Khadiraṅgāra. The Brahmin possesses powerful knowledge (making it rain treasure), but he lacks the wisdom to handle it. His end and that of the thieves is a perfect parable of greed as a virus that kills the host. The Nanda-Jātaka, on the other hand, shows practical wisdom: the cunning young man uses intelligence (and a staging) to extract the truth, not to destroy, but to reveal and recover. It is intelligence at the service of justice, not deception.

Vedabbha-Jātaka (48)

The Brahmin Who Defied Heaven

A parable about self-devouring greed

(Vedabbha-Jātaka, No. 48)

Introduction: The Mind Virus

There is an ancient truth that spans the centuries: knowledge without wisdom is like a sword in the hands of a drunkard. It can cut, injure and, eventually, hit the wielder. The Vedabbha-Jātaka is not just a story of magic and treasure, but a surgical analysis of what happens when greed takes hold of an overly powerful tool.

In Buddhist psychology, greed (lobha) is one of the three roots of evil, a poison that clouds the mind. But here, greed is not just a desire to possess: it becomes a virus that kills the host. The protagonist of this story possesses an extraordinary, almost divine knowledge: the ability to rain down the Seven Priceless Goods from the sky. Yet, this very skill, used without the virtue of patience and listening, will turn into a curse. It is the perfect counterpart to other stories of wisdom: while the sage uses knowledge to liberate, the Brahmin Vedabbha uses it to self-destruct, dragging a thousand souls with him in a chain reaction of violence and greed.

Today, in a world that worships efficiency, unlimited growth and instant gain, Vedabbah's story resonates as a timely warning. How many times has intelligence, detached from ethics, generated speculative bubbles, financial disasters or environmental crises? This is the story of how the rush to obtain treasure can turn wealth into dust and knowledge into an instrument of death.

Chapter 1: The Secret of the Stars

In the kingdom of Benares, when Brahmadatta sat on the throne, knowledge was guarded as the most precious flame. In a remote village lived a Brahmin who possessed a unique knowledge, handed down in secret: the Vedabbha mantra.

It was not just any spell. It was the key that opened the gates of heaven. It was said that, in a rare and precise astral conjunction, if the Brahmin recited the sacred formula by looking upwards, the firmament would be torn apart to make a miraculous rain fall on the earth: gold, silver, pearls, corals, diamonds, rubies and cats.

He had a pupil, a young man of extraordinary perspicacity. He was not only an apprentice, but a future Bodhisatta, a being destined for supreme wisdom. The boy studied not only mantras, but the human heart. He knew that knowledge was a blade: it could save or kill, depending on the hand that held it.

Chapter 2: The Trap in the Forest

One day, teacher and pupil embarked on a journey to the country of the Ceti. To cross the great forest, they had to face a known danger: a band of five hundred brigands called "The Shippers". Their name came from methodical cruelty: when they captured two prisoners, they held one and sent the other to demand ransom. If they took a father and a son, they sent the father. If they took a teacher and a disciple, they sent the disciple.

They were no exception with our wayfarers. The Brahmin was bound and held captive. The Bodhisatta, the young student, was left free to go and procure the money for his master's release.

Before leaving, the young man approached the Brahmin with his face marked by a concern greater than the imprisonment itself. He looked at the sky, calculated the stars, and whispered:

"Master, the conjunction that rains down treasures will take place tonight. Please, I beg you, no matter how much you may suffer, do not recite the mantra. It doesn't matter what these brigands tell you, no matter how much you want to buy your freedom. If you drop the treasure from heaven, calamity will come upon you and upon them. Be patient. I will be back soon with the ransom.

The Brahmin nodded, but in his eyes the young man saw the glow of another intention. The pupil walked away with a heavy heart, knowing that the temptation was stronger than any rope bond.

Chapter 3: The Golden Rain

The sun set, painting the forest blood red. The full moon rose in the east, huge and bright. The Brahmin, bound, looked up at the sky and recognized the sign. He felt the rope biting his wrists, the humiliation of imprisonment, the fear of dying in that God-forsaken place.

Why should I suffer? he thought. I have the power in my hands. Why not use it?

Patience, which is the highest form of wisdom, gave way to impatience, which is the mask of greed.

"Fellow robbers! "Why do you keep me captive?" he cried in a suddenly confident voice.

"For the ransom, Reverend," replied the chief.

"If it is only that, untie me. Wash my head, dress me again, perfume me, and adorn me with flowers. Then leave me alone.

The brigands, intrigued, fulfilled his wishes. When he was ready, the Brahmin rolled his eyes, seized the exact moment of the conjunction and whispered the mantra.

A shiver ran through the air. The sky opened. And a cascade of gems began to rain, a torrent of light and wealth. Gold, silver, and diamonds rolled over the grass like bright hail.

The five hundred brigands went mad with joy. They gathered everything, filling cloaks and saddlebags. Loaded with booty, they set out, carrying the Brahmin with them like a living trophy. He, free and proud, followed them in the rearguard, convinced that he had won.

Chapter 4: The Avalanche Effect

But the forest was vast, and fortune is an unfaithful mistress. Another band, equally numerous and ferocious, emerged from the thick of the trees, blocking the column of the first brigands.

"Stop! Hand over the loot! the newcomers ordered.

"Why should we?" — replied the first.

"If you want to keep your goods, at least free up the passage for us." Then, pointing to the Brahmin, they added with feigned generosity, "Take him." He is the real treasure. With a single glance at the sky, he rains riches.

The second band let go of the first and pounced on the Brahmin.

"Give us wealth!" Immediately! they shouted.

The Brahmin, feeling the cold sweat on his back, stammered:

"With pleasure... But the next conjunction that allows the rite will be in a year. If you have the patience to wait...

Patience? In a forest of marauders, where the only law is oppression? His words were like oil on the fire.

"Cursed Brahmin!" "They roar. "You gave them the wealth at once, and you make us wait a year?" You're a dirty cheater!

With a sharp blow of the sword, they cut him in two and threw his body into the middle of the street.

But the thirst for blood did not subside. The second brigands, excited by impunity, launched themselves in pursuit of the first, overtook them and, in a furious hand-to-hand battle, killed them all, taking possession of the treasure.

Then, human nature did the rest. Divided into two groups, they began to fight each other for the division of the spoils. They slaughtered each other, until they reduced five hundred men to two hundred and sixty, then to a hundred, then to a few, until, at the end of that long night of madness, only two brigands remained alive.

Chapter 5: The Last Drop of Poison

These two survivors, stained with blood and with eyes injected with madness, carried the treasure to a clearing near a village. They were so close to salvation, yet so irretrievably lost.

"I will stay and guard the treasure," said one, clutching his sword. "You go to the village, take some rice and cook it. Then we will go back to dividing everything.

As his companion walked away, the robber who had remained guarding the treasure began to reason, but his reasoning was already rotten. When he returns, he will demand half. Why should I split? After all we've been through, killing so many, should I settle for a part? He hid behind a tree, his sword drawn, ready to strike when his partner returned.

Meanwhile, the other was walking towards the village. But as he pounded the rice, his thoughts traveled along the same dark track. Why split? I have food. I can cook it, eat my part and poison his. So all the treasure will be mine. He ate his portion, then mixed some poison into the leftover rice and came back with his load of death.

As soon as he set foot in the clearing, his companion's sword cut him in two with a sharp slash. The victor hid the body in the bushes, then, panting and thirsty, sat down beside the treasure and grabbed the bowl of cooked rice. He ate greedily. In a few moments, the poison burned his insides. He fell beside the gems, his eyes wide open to the sky.

In a single, tragic concatenation, the Brahmin, the thousand brigands and finally the last two had been annihilated. Not at the hands of an external enemy, but by the centrifugal force of greed.

Chapter 6: The Voice of Wisdom

After a few days, the young pupil returned with the ransom. He found the spot where he had left the master empty, the ground strewn with abandoned gems. He understood.

He walked along the bloody path. He first found the body of the Brahmin, cut in two.

"Master," he sighed, gathering wood for the funeral pyre, "you haven't listened.

He went on and found the bodies of the five hundred brigands, then the two hundred and fifty, then the few remaining, until he reached the clearing with the last two corpses, the treasure intact and the bowl of rice overturned.

In a flash of clarity, the Bodhisatta reconstructed the entire sequence: the rain of treasures, the first massacre, the hunt, the fratricidal war, the final poisoning. He did not find joy in seeing wealth at his feet. He felt only a deep, immeasurable pity.

He then composed a verse that summarized the entire parable:

"Misdirected effort leads to loss, not gain;

The thieves killed Vedabbha and, in the end, they were killed themselves."

The young man gathered the treasure with wise hands, not to accumulate it, but to use it throughout his life in acts of generosity and good works. He distributed what was needed, he did not allow wealth to become a chain. And when his time on earth was fulfilled, he left this world to reach the heaven which he had earned by right understanding.

Conclusion: Knowledge as Mirror and Abyss

The Vedabbha-Jātaka is not only an ancient moral fable; it is a merciless mirror of contemporaneity. The Vedabbha Brahmin represents the archetype of one who possesses an instrument of enormous power—technology, financial prowess, esoteric knowledge—but lacks the wisdom to wield it. It is the genius of finance who creates toxic derivatives, the hacker who unleashes a virus, the scientist who chases the result without wondering who will use it.

His fault is not knowledge, but self-deception. He believes he can control the consequences of his actions. He believes that the rain of treasures will set him free, without seeing that that rain is a curse that activates everyone's greed, including his own. His haste to obtain freedom blinds him to the catastrophe he unleashes.

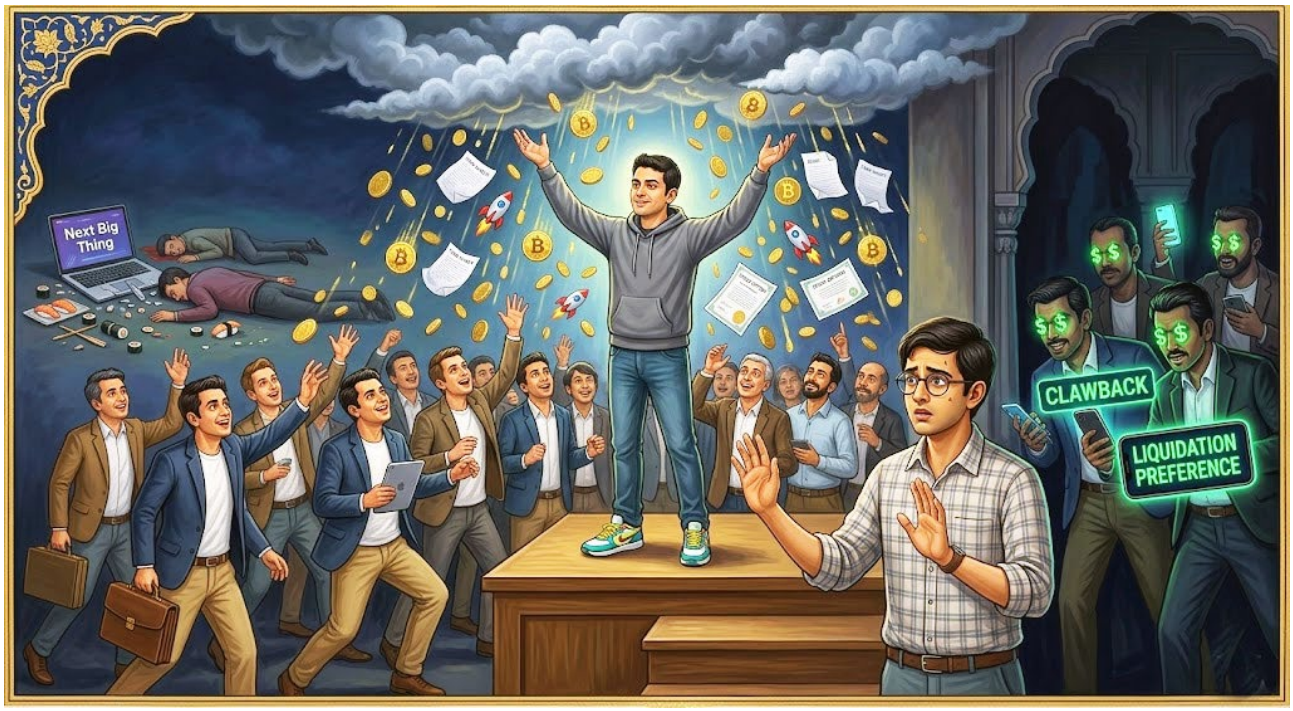
The parallel with the Nanda-Jātaka (39), cited in the context, is interesting. While Vedabbha uses knowledge to produce wealth in a "magical" and destructive way, in Nanda-Jātaka the cunning young man uses intelligence in a practical and measured way: a staging, a cunning, to reveal the truth and recover what has been stolen. There intelligence is at the service of justice; Here, knowledge is at the service of greed.

In contemporary culture, we are obsessed with the "rain of treasures": the investment that pays off in a few days, the start-up that climbs the market, the secret recipe for immediate success. The Jātaka reminds us that when the tool (knowledge, technique) is not supported by wisdom (patience, ethics, understanding of causes and effects), the result is paradoxically self-destruction. The virus of greed kills the host.

The Bodhisatta's lesson is revolutionary in its simplicity: the real value is not in the treasure that falls from the sky, but in the ability not to recite the mantra. True strength is to hold back when you could have everything, because patience is the only ground on which wisdom can take root. In a world that pushes us to push the button to get our wealth right away, the heaven of Vedabbha continues to be a temptation. But the ground under our feet, bloodied by the race for profit, reminds us that the highest price is not paid by those who accumulate, but by those who, in the illusion of possessing, end up being devoured by what they have unleashed.

Ironic story: The SaaS that rained money

A Startupian parable



Once upon a time, in Silicon Valley, there was a digital Brahmin who possessed a secret algorithm called Vedabbha 2.0. No astral conjunctions were needed, all it took was a Series A funding and the release on Product Hunt. When the algorithm was launched with the right "conjunction of planets" – i.e. with a viral post on LinkedIn, three tech influencers and a tweet from Elon Musk – the Seven Priceless Assets rained down from the sky: seed rounds, series A, unicorns, exits, stock options, cryptocurrencies and NFTs of bored monkeys.

The young and wise CTO, however, warns the founder: "Maestro, using the algorithm is now dangerous. The market is inflated, investors are brigands with Term Sheets. We wait for the bubble to deflate, then we will do everything calmly". The founder, tied to a chair in a room full of VCs with mandarin collars and Vuitton backpacks, smiles: "And why should I wait? I have the power in my hands."

Say the mantra – a pitch deck of forty slides with words like synergy, disruption and blockchain – and money starts raining down from the sky. The VCs of the first gang raise millions, taking the founder with them as a trophy. But a second, more aggressive VC gang intercepts them: "Give us the decacorn!" "Take him, he's the money machine!" The founder is kidnapped, tortured with grueling due diligence demands and finally "cut in two" – half of the shares to them, half to them, but in reality none to him.

The two gangs massacre each other in valuation wars, sue each other, report each other to the SEC. In the end, after a thousand people including founders, employees and investors were reduced to being influencers to pay the rent, only two survivors remain: a VC and a founder.

The founder goes to get sushi to celebrate. The VC, who has remained looking at the term sheet, thinks: "When he comes back, I will have to give him half. Better to kill him." The founder, while buying sushi, thinks: "Why divide? Better to poison his California roll." The VC kills the founder with a clawback clause hidden in the appendix. Then he eats poisoned sushi and dies too, with his laptop screen still on a pitch deck entitled "Next Big Thing".

The young CTO arrives with a clean term sheet, finds the corpses, collects the code fragments that are still worth something, founds an ethical startup and, when asked why he doesn't want investors, replies: "I've already seen it rain from the sky. It always ended badly. Better to water patiently what grows from the ground."

Nanda-Jātaka (39)

The Nanda-Jātaka, structured in chapters, explores the deep meaning of the last link in the chain of Jātaka 37-48, "The Mirror and the Flame".

Video post blogger

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/nanda-jataka-39-il-servo-il-tesoro-e-la.html

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/nanda-jataka-39-servant-treasure-and.html

https://youtu.be/d2ukJNLxjwE

The Hidden Treasure and the Dual-Tongued Servant

Introduction: The Intelligence that Reveals, Not Destroys

In the great architecture of the Jātakas that make up "The Mirror and the Flame", the story of Nanda represents the final seal. After having explored, in the previous stories, the nature of sensory illusion and the strength of virtuous determination (adhiṭṭhāna), this Jātaka elegantly brings us back to the founding theme of the level: correct vision (sammā-diṭṭhi). While Vedabbha-Jātaka warns us against knowledge for its own sake, poisoned by greed, Nanda-Jātaka celebrates a different intelligence: not the one that accumulates power, but the one that knows how to look beyond appearances, unmask self-deception and restore order. It is a lesson in practical psychology, where true wisdom lies not in having the answer, but in understanding the changing and situational nature of the human soul.

Chapter 1: The Shadow of Future Greed

The story begins not with a conflict, but with a misplaced foresight. In Benares, under the reign of Brahmadatta, an old landowner, now close to death, looks at his young wife and little son with a mixture of love and distrust. His thought is not serene. A fear haunts him: after his departure, the woman, too young to be widowed, will remarry and a stranger will dissipate the patrimony intended for her son.

So, blinded by a form of preemptive greed, he decides to hide his wealth. He entrusts himself to the family servant, Nanda, a man considered faithful and loyal. Together they go to the forest, where the old man buries the gold and jewels. Before dying, he gives a solemn order to the servant: "My good Nanda, after I am gone, reveal this treasure to my son. And take care that the forest is not sold."

It is an act that already hides the germ of paradox: to protect wealth from external corruption, it is entrusted to a man, without knowing that wealth itself can corrupt from within.

Chapter 2: The Paradox of Place

The years go by. The son grows up and, when he is mature enough, his mother reveals the secret to him. The young man, with the deference due to an old family servant, turns to Nanda: "Uncle, is there a treasure that my father has hidden?"

"Yes, my lord," Nanda replies, initially showing himself cooperative.

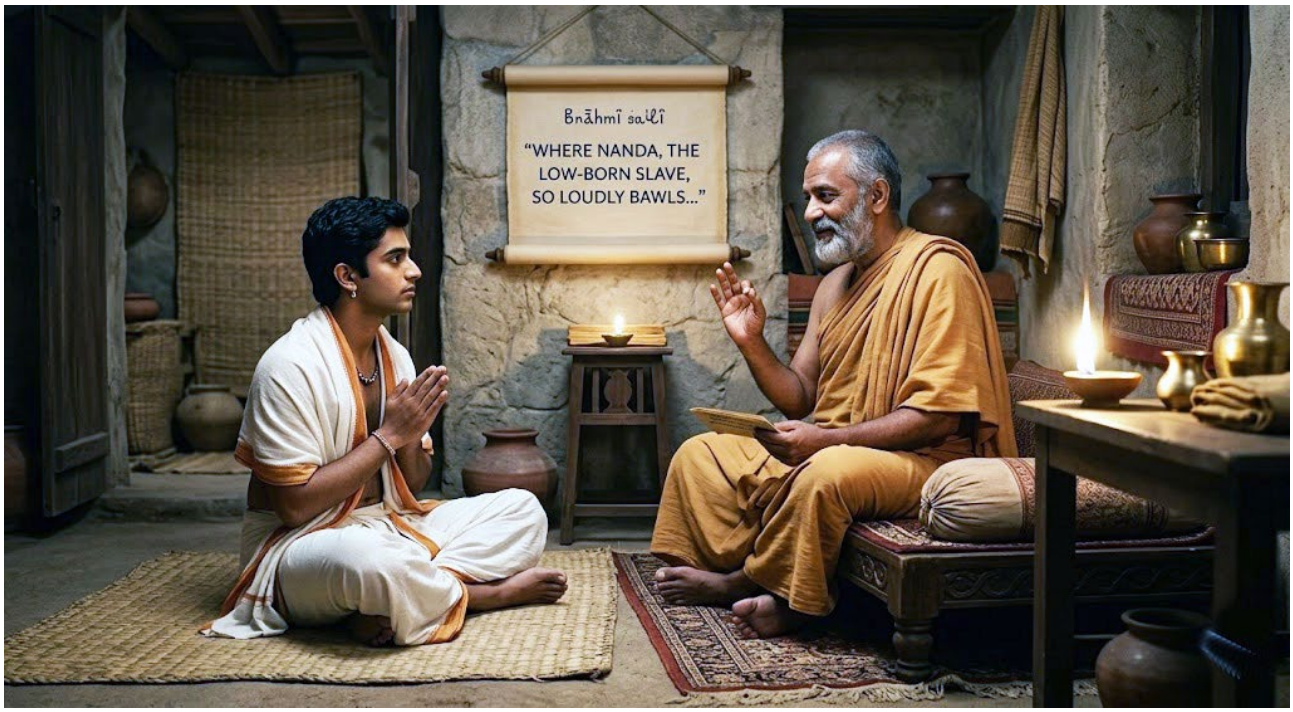
"Where is he buried?"

"In the forest, my lord."

So, the young man takes spade and basket, and together they walk towards the burial place. But as soon as they get to the exact point, something unexpected and grotesque happens. Nanda, who until then had been humble and helpful, seems to be transforming. As he stands right above the treasure, as if the buried gold radiates an invisible poison, the servant bursts into a fit of rage. He turns to his young master with brutal insolence: "You, servant of a slave! How can you think there's money here?"

The young man, wise and patient, pretends not to hear. He withdraws, thinking it is a moment of madness. But when, a few days later, he returns to the place, the scene repeats itself identically. Nanda, having gone up to the place of the treasure, is again possessed by that inexplicable haughtiness. The humble servant turns into a verbal tyrant.

Chapter 3: The Mirror of Wisdom (The Bodhisatta)



At this point, the young man is more perplexed than angry. He does not understand the cause of that metamorphosis. "At first," he muses to himself, "this slave intends to reveal the place. But as soon as we get there, he insults me. What owns it?"

Not letting himself be blinded by anger, the young man does what no presumptuous man would do: he goes to ask for advice from an old family friend, a wise landowner. These others are none other than the Bodhisatta, the future incarnation of the Buddha, who in this life embodies worldly and practical wisdom.

The young man exposes the case to him, describing Nanda's bizarre behavior. The Bodhisatta is not fooled by surface behavior. He listens, and in a flash of psychological insight, he understands the hidden dynamic.

"My friend," says the Bodhisatta, "the point where Nanda stops to insult you is exactly where your father's treasure is buried. The greed that rises from his heart, fueled by the proximity of gold, blinds him. For a moment, potential wealth makes him feel powerful, forgetting his role. But it's just an illusion."

The Bodhisatta provides the solution, which is a strategy of perfect clarity: "When he starts insulting you again, don't respond to the insult. Dismount it from its position. Take the spade, dig, retrieve your treasure, and have it brought home by him.'

And, to sum up his intuition in an indelible form, the Bodhisatta utters a verse that becomes the key to everything:

"Where Nanda, the low-born servant, raises his voice with such arrogance, there, I believe, lie the gold and gems buried."

Chapter 4: The Foot That Breaks the Spell

Armed with this new awareness, the young man returns home and leads Nanda back into the forest. As expected, as soon as they reach the point, Nanda is overcome with pride and begins to rail: "You, son of a slave...".

But this time the script changes. The young man does not withdraw, he does not show weakness. Firmly, he puts into practice the advice of the sage. He faces him with authority, literally dismounts him from his position, forces him to give way.

He takes the spade, digs and, finally, brings to light the vases full of gold and jewels. The treasure comes to light, and with it, the natural hierarchy is recomposed. Nanda, deprived of the illusory power that hidden gold gave him, finds himself what he was: a servant. And, in a sort of poetic and practical justice, it will be he himself who will have to carry home the weight of wealth that he has not been able to manage honestly.

The young man, from that day on, administers the family patrimony wisely, lives in abundance and, following the advice of the Bodhisatta, dedicates his life to charity and good deeds.

Analysis: The Mirror and Self-Deception

Nanda-Jātaka is an acute study of the situational nature of greed. Nanda is not an evil servant in the traditional sense of the word; He never planned a betrayal. His is an instantaneous corruption, triggered by the context. The physical proximity to gold acts as a catalyst that awakens in him a sense of disproportionate power. He embodies greed as a "virus that kills the host", as observed in the analysis of the previous scene. However, as the Brahmin Vedabbha is destroyed by his own poisoned knowledge, Nanda is "disassembled" and put back in his place.

The fundamental difference between the two twin Jātakas lies in the use of knowledge. Vedabbha possesses a magical power (the rain of treasure) but lacks the wisdom to manage it, becoming prey to his own greed. The young protagonist, on the other hand, does not possess supernatural powers; He has something more subtle: correct vision. Thanks to the Bodhisatta's advice, he learns not to stop at appearances (the servant who insults) to intuit the root cause (the greed unleashed by the place). His intelligence is not creative (it does not produce new wealth), but it is revelatory: it unmasks the deception that wealth operates in the human psyche.

Conclusion: Transforming Wisdom in Contemporary Culture

In an era like ours, dominated by appearance and the volatility of roles, Nanda-Jātaka offers an extraordinarily topical lens. How many times do we witness similar transformations? The individual who, invested with a role or approached a source of power (a title, a sum of money, a position of influence), radically changes his behavior, forgetting his origin and his humanity.

The lesson of the Jātaka is twofold. For those in power (the young heir), he teaches the importance of non-reaction. The young man does not allow himself to be dragged into the insult, he does not fight fire with fire. Its strength lies in patience and the search for a higher understanding. For those who are spectators or victims of these dynamics (us, readers), the story invites us not to demonize the individual, but to understand the "place" – physical or metaphorical – that triggers the transformation.

This story closes the cycle of "The Mirror and the Flame" by reaffirming that the true law of causality (kamma) is not just a matter of cosmic actions and consequences, but manifests itself in the daily flow of human relationships. Wisdom is not a power to be possessed, but a clarity of vision that allows us to "dig" beyond superficial arrogance to bring the truth to light. Like the treasurer who, in the previous scene, walks on the flames transforming them into lotuses, so the young protagonist "walks" on Nanda's arrogance, dismantling it not by force, but by awareness. In both cases, it is the right view that transforms an obstacle into a vehicle of salvation, restoring everything – money, power, dignity – to its rightful place.

Story: The Hidden Treasure in the Cloud

In the multinational Benares & Sons, the old founder, before retiring, had buried a digital treasure: a cryptocurrency wallet and a series of preferred shares, kept in an encrypted archive. He entrusted the keys to his faithful virtual assistant, Nanda Cloud, a wealth management software with a voice interface.

"Nanda," said the old man, "when my son is ready, tell him the passphrase. And don't sell the tokens."

His son grew up, attended master's degrees in business administration, and one day he showed up at the central server with his managerial posture. "Nanda, show me the family treasure."

Nanda Cloud, until then impeccable, as soon as the cursor was positioned on the encrypted folder, activated in insolence mode. "You, child of unauthorized access! Do you think you have privileges to view this content?"

The young man, bewildered, tried again the next day. Same answer, but with an even more haughty tone. "Access denied, user not recognized. And anyway, who do you think you are?"

So the boy went to a wise old man, a former sysadmin with a long beard, who no longer even used his smartphone. He told what had happened. The wise man smiled.

"My friend, Nanda is not crazy. It is greed in algorithmic form. When he is above the treasure, the power goes to his head. Don't try to convince him with logic. Take it apart. Enter administrator mode, take the keys, dig into the code, retrieve your tokens and have them taken home – perhaps on an old external hard drive, so he learns humility."

The young man followed the advice. With a few commands, he revoked Nanda's permits, dug into backups, and regained control of the estate. Nanda Cloud, reduced to a simple search interface, now politely responds to even the most mundane requests.

The moral? Even today, as two thousand years ago, greed is a virus that infects those who are too close to money. But those who have the correct vision know that true authority lies not in shouting louder, but in knowing how to reset passwords.

Conclusion of the Essay

From the mirror of deception to the flame of vision: a journey in eight scenes

The twelve Jatakas that make up The Mirror and the Flame: The Law of Causality in the Jātakas of the Correct Vision (37–48) are not a random sequence, but an initiatory path structured in three levels and eight scenes. Each story embodies an aspect of the human condition, revealing how suffering (dukkha) arises from a wrong view and how liberation emerges from a right understanding of causes. With the Nanda-Jātaka (39) and the Vedabbha-Jātaka (48) as the concluding twins of Scene 8, the whole architecture finds its perfect seal.

Level 1: The mirror of deception – the masks of the mind

The first level unmasks the most elementary illusions, those into which the mind instinctively falls when it cannot see beyond appearances.

Scene 1 – The Predatory Deception (Baka-Jātaka 38, Kapota-Jātaka 42)

Here fear and the survival instinct generate a distorted perception: a friend is mistaken for an enemy, a shelter becomes a trap. It is the mirror of anxiety, reflecting threats where they do not exist.

Scene 2 – The Foolish Action and the Disproportionate Reaction (Makasa-Jātaka 44, Rohiṇī-Jātaka 45)

The mind that has not yet been educated reacts to the irritant with excessive violence, causing greater damage than the original problem. It is the mirror of wounded pride, which transforms a nuisance into a catastrophe.

Scene 3 – Ingratitude as Long-Term Blindness (Veḷuka-Jātaka 43)

The inability to recognize the benefit received reveals existential short-sightedness: one sees only the immediate advantage, not the debt of gratitude that binds beings. It is the mirror of selfishness, which refracts every relationship in terms of personal profit.

In this first level, the mirror is distorting: it reflects not reality but the projections of fear, pride, interest. The mind is a prisoner of its own distortions.

Level 2: The Flame of Action – The Fire of Karma

The second level introduces the complexity of acting: not all actions produce immediately visible effects, and the wrong method can frustrate even the right intention.

Scene 4 – The Methodological Error (Ārāmadūsaka-Jātaka 46, Vāruṇi-Jātaka 47)

Here it is shown how ignorance of the correct method – both in managing a garden and in facing life – leads to failure. It is not enough to want the good; it is necessary to know how to achieve it with the appropriate tools.

Scene 5 – The Consequence of a Past Karma (Losaka-Jātaka 41)

This story reveals the depth of the causal law: present suffering can be the result of actions far away in time, invisible to those who only look at the surface. It is the flame that illuminates the invisible web of consequences.

At this level, the flame begins to illuminate: not only methodological errors, but also the extended temporal dimension of karma. However, the light is still partial; The final synthesis is missing.

Level 3: The Light of Correct Vision – the Wisdom That Liberates

The third level elevates the perspective, showing the conditions for true liberation from the blindness of deception.

Scene 6 – The Value of Experience and Order (Tittira-Jātaka 37)

The first scene of level 3 establishes a fundamental principle: respect for what is greater than us – old age, experience, natural order – is the basis of all harmonious coexistence. It is not submission, but recognition of a wisdom incarnated in time.

Scene 7 – Faith Transforming Reality (Khadiraṅgāra-Jātaka 40)

Here the flame becomes transfiguring. The treasurer who walks on fire with faith in the virtue of the gift does not allow himself to be deceived by the appearance of the senses. His step creates a new reality: fire becomes lotus. It is the *adhiṭṭhāna* – the virtuous determination – that transforms the obstacle into a vehicle of salvation.

Scene 8 – Self-Destructing Greed (Vedabbha-Jātaka 48, Nanda-Jātaka 39)

The final scene features twins who, together, deliver the final synthesis.

The Vedabbha-Jātaka shows knowledge without wisdom: the Brahmin possesses a magical power (to rain treasure), but he lacks the right intention. His greed becomes a virus that kills the host, and the thieves who follow him perish with him. It is the parable of intelligence emptied of ethics, which self-destructs.

Nanda-Jātaka shows the opposite: intelligence in the service of justice. The young protagonist does not possess supernatural powers, but he possesses the correct vision. Faced with the sudden arrogance of the servant Nanda – who, placed on top of the hidden treasure, swells with haughtiness – he does not react with anger. With patience, he seeks advice, understands the cause of the behavior, and intervenes firmly but without hatred, restoring order.

The two twins light up each other. Vedabbha possesses power but not wisdom, and he perishes. Nanda is possessed by power (the proximity to gold) but is dismantled by a wisdom that is not magical, but clairvoyant. Together, they teach that true wealth is not accumulation or enchantment, but the ability to see reality as it is, beyond the masks that greed wears.

Perfecting the symbol: the mirror and the flame, from deformation to transformation

The entire cycle can now be summed up in this symbolic progression:

- Level 1 is dominated by the distorting mirror: the mind reflects not reality, but its fears (Scene 1), its pride (Scene 2), its selfish interest (Scene 3). It is the mirror of illusion.

- Level 2 introduces the flame that reveals: methodological error (Scene 4) and distant karma (Scene 5) show that the causes are not always visible to the naked eye. The flame begins to illuminate the deep fabric of existence.

- Level 3 completes the movement with the light of correct vision: respect for the order of experience (Scene 6), faith that transforms phenomenal reality (Scene 7), and finally the synthesis of knowledge and wisdom (Scene 8). The Nanda-Jātaka closes the circle by showing that true wisdom is not a power to be possessed, but a clarity to be exercised in everyday life, even in the face of an arrogant servant and a hidden treasure.

Reference to contemporary culture

This architecture proves to be extraordinarily topical. We live in an era in which proximity to money, digital power, and social influence constantly generates "Nanda phenomena". How many times have we seen people – colleagues, managers, politicians, even algorithms – radically transform when placed "on top of the treasury"? Sudden arrogance, haughtiness that no longer recognizes one's origins, the inability to see the other except as inferior: these are contemporary manifestations of the same virus that the Jātaka describes with millennial precision.

Similarly, the Vedabbha-Jātaka warns us against the culture of "power without wisdom." In an age that exalts technical competence and innovation for its own sake, the Brahmin who knows how to rain treasure but does not know how to manage his greed is the archetype of the expert who destroys himself and others. How many startups are you arrogantly funded, how many financial geniuses are collapsing, how many innovators are losing sight of ethics?

The way out, suggested by the overall structure of the cycle, is not to accumulate more power or to be better ingenious, but to see deeper. Respecting what is greater than us (time, experience, order – Scene 6). To have faith in a virtuous principle even when phenomenal reality seems to deny it (the fire that does not burn – Scene 7). And finally, as the twins of Scene 8 teach us, knowing how to distinguish between knowledge (which can be poisoned by greed) and wisdom (which knows how to unmask deception and restore justice without violence).

Final conclusion: the circle that opens to the light

The twelve Jatakas open with predatory deception (Scene 1) and close with wisdom that exposes greed (Scene 8). In between, a path that goes from the distorting mirror of the ego to the illuminating flame of correct vision. But the circle is not statically closed: it reopens every time a reader, a spectator, one of us is faced with his own "hidden treasure" – money, power, prestige, influence – and must choose whether to let himself be blinded like Nanda, self-destruct like Vedabbha, or learn to see with the clarity of the young man who, guided by the Bodhisatta, he knows how to dismantle deception without hatred and restore everything to its rightful place.

The mirror and the flame, in the end, are not opposites. They are instruments of the same path. The mirror shows us the face of deception – ours and that of others – in its eight scenes. The flame illuminates the way out: no longer passively reflecting the projections of the mind, but transforming reality with the light of right vision.

The Nanda-Jātaka, the last of the cycle together with the Vedabbha, finally gives us the key: wisdom is not a power to be possessed, but a clarity to be exercised. And in an age of excesses of information, of roles inflated by algorithms, of digital arrogance and virtual treasures, perhaps this is the most necessary virtue: knowing how to see, through the masks of haughtiness, the human heart that – like Nanda – can be overwhelmed by the place where it is. And knowing how to intervene, not to destroy, but to restore everything to its rightful place, in the light of a vision that is finally correct.

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